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ABSTRACT

This monograph contains the invited papers of the major speakers at the Educational Policy Institute's Second Annual International Conference in Quality in Higher Education held at Exeter College, University of Oxford, England in the summer of 2001. The purpose of the conference was to discuss how quality is being defined, measured, and ensured in the context of higher education. The papers are: (1) "Oxford and Quality Assurance in Great Britain" (John Sayer); (2) "Oxford, Bologna and Bruegel's Bee-Master" (Liesbeth van Welie); (3) "Measures of Quality in Higher Education--An American Perspective" (Marc A. vanderHeyden); (4) "Measuring Quality in Regional Universities: A Call for Appropriate Standards" (Russell C. Long); (5) "A Case Study in Changing Academic Standards" (Gerald E. Lang, Russell K. Dean, and Rosemary R. Haggett); (6) "The Impact of Faculty Retirement on the Quality of the Academy" (Valerie Martin Conley); (7) "April Is the Cruelest Month: Maintaining High Quality While Replacing Retiring Faculty" (Charlotte Stokes); (8) "Living Near the Edge: Improving the Quality of Strategic Decision-Making Regarding Academic Programs and Information Technology" (John C. Cavanaugh); (9) "Political Realities for Leaders with a Quality Agenda for Educational Institutions" (Mary Ellen Drushal); and (10) "Synthesis and Epilogue" (Steven M. Janosik). Conference schedule and participant list are appended. Each paper contains references. (SLD)

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International Perspectives on Quality in Higher Education

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
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2

International Perspectives on Quality in Higher Education

Exeter College
University of Oxford
Oxford, England
July 2001

Editors
Steven M. Janosik
Don G. Creamer
M. David Alexander

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Editors iv

About the Institute v

EPI Publications vi

EPI Faculty vii

Forward viii

Oxford and Quality Assurance in Great Britain 1
John Sayer

Oxford, Bologna and Bruegel's Bee-Master 8
Liesbeth van Welie

Measures of Quality in Higher Education – An American Perspective 14
Marc A. vanderHeyden

Measuring Quality in Regional Universities: A Call for Appropriate Standards 21
Russell C. Long

A Case Study in Changing Academic Standards 27
Gerald E. Lang, Russell K. Dean, & Rosemary R. Haggett

The Impact of Faculty Retirement on the Quality of the Academy 39
Valerie Martin Conley

April is the Cruelest Month: Maintaining High Quality While Replacing Retiring Faculty 48
Charlotte Stokes

Living Near the Edge: Improving the Quality of Strategic Decision-Making Regarding Academic Programs and Information Technology 56
John C. Cavanaugh

Political Realities for Leaders with a Quality Agenda for Educational Institutions 65
Mary Ellen Drushal

Synthesis and Epilogue 81
Steven M. Janosik

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Conference Schedule 84

Participant List 89

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Steven M. Janosik is associate professor of higher education and student affairs in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department of the College of Human Resources and Education at Virginia Tech and co-director of the Educational Policy Institute of Virginia Tech. Dr. Janosik has more than 20 years of experience in college administration. From 1994 to 1997, he served as the deputy secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has written more than 30 articles on the topics of campus crime, law in higher education, liability and risk management, residence life, student development and state higher education policy. His latest research includes papers entitled, *Trends in Community College Litigation: Implications for Policy and Practice* and *The Impact of the Campus Crime Awareness Act on Student Behavior.*

Don G. Creamer is professor and program leader of higher education and student affairs in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department of the College of Human Resources and Education at Virginia Tech. Creamer also serves as the co-director of the Educational Policy Institute. He has taught higher education and student affairs graduate students for more than 20 years of his almost 40-year career in higher education. His scholarship generally focuses on student affairs. Two of his most recent books include *Improving Staffing Practices in Student Affairs* and *The Professional Student Affairs Administrator: Educator, Leader, and Manager.* He has consulted in more than 100 colleges and universities, but most of his work has been in community colleges where he specializes in student and organization development and academic advising. His current interests focus on educational policy-making.

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Educational Policy Institute ***(EPI)*** is sponsored by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies of Virginia Tech's College of Human Resources and Education. The Institute is composed of faculty from a variety of departments on the Virginia Tech campus. Its purpose is to facilitate the distribution of information and to stimulate discussion of policy issues affecting public education and higher education in Virginia. The work of the Institute expresses the independent views and opinions of the researchers. They are not intended to represent the official comment or position of any elected or appointed official or any state agency.

The mission of ***EPI*** is to:

- Establish an organization devoted to educational policy research and service in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation,
- Conduct research intended to inform educational policy makers,
- Focus research interests of the faculty and graduate students on educational policy issues, and
- Act as a service unit for educational policy groups such as the State Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

EPI's most visible service to the Commonwealth of Virginia is its policy web site on which most educational policy issues and decisions are detailed and made available to anyone with access to the web. Faculty members and graduate students track the activities of the State Council of Higher Education as well as many activities of the State Board of Education. ***EPI*** also has chronicled the activities of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission of Higher Education and also maintains an unofficial web site for the Virginia Business Higher Education Council.

Members of ***EPI*** have completed several research projects including a national studies of the appointment and training of public college and university trustees, academic program approval and review processes by state coordinating and governing boards, and the impact of the Campus Crime Awareness Act on student behavior. In addition, ***EPI*** faculty members have written policy papers on the Virginia's Standards of Learning, quality in Virginia higher education, and performance funding in Virginia higher education. All of these research reports and policy briefs are available at no charge to interested persons.

Those wishing to contact the ***EP***I, should write or e-mail Dr. Don G. Creamer (dgc2@vt.edu), or Dr. Steven M. Janosik (sjanosik@vt.edu), at 308 East Eggleston Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061. The Institute's web site is:

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Creamer, D., Janosik, S. M., Zhao, C., Simpson, M., Perry, M. (1998). *Academic program approval and review practices in the United States and selected foreign countries*. EPI Policy Paper No. 2, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

Cross, L. H. (2000). *An author's response - The standards of learning (SOL) reform: Real consequences require real tests*. EPI Policy Paper No. 6, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

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Fife, J. D., & Janosik, S. M. (1999). *Defining and ensuring quality in Virginia higher education*. EPI Policy Paper No. 3, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

Krill, C. W. (2001). *Virginia charter schools funding and national charter school trends*. EPI Policy Paper No. 7, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

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Janosik, S. M. (2000). *The impact of the Campus Crime Awareness Act on student behavior*. EPI Policy Paper No. 5, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

Janosik, S. M. (1998). *Information needs and preferences of education policy makers in Virginia*. EPI Policy Paper No. 1, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

Janosik, S. M., Creamer, D. G., & Alexander, M. D. (2000). *International perspectives on quality in higher education*. EPI Monograph Series on Higher Education, No. 1, Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.

Virginia Department of Education (2000). *Report on supply and demand of instructional personnel in Virginia: 1999-2000*. Richmond, VA. Dr. Michael L. Perry, Principal Investigator & Ms. Sandra L. Dika, Research Assistant.

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FORWARD

This monograph contains the invited papers of the major speakers at ***EPI's*** Second Annual International Conference on Quality in Higher Education held at Exeter College, University of Oxford, Oxford, England in the summer of 2001. The purpose of the conference was to discuss how quality is being defined, measured, and ensured in the context of higher education.

Keynote speakers from three different countries were invited to share their thoughts on this topic with conference participants. Perspectives from Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States were included.

Dr. John Sayer represented Great Britain. His paper highlights the uniqueness of the Oxford system of education and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) as a method for assessing quality currently in use in that country. Drs. Liesbeth van Welie represented the Netherlands. Her paper addresses the potential affect of the Bologna Declaration on the homogenization of European higher education and the effect that it may have on quality and international benchmarking. Dr. Marc vanderHeyden describes important measures of quality common in the United States and of small private liberal arts colleges, in particular.

Seven other senior level administrators submitted papers as well. Dr. Russell Long discusses the difficulties with adopting "standard" performance measures for all types of institutions and makes a forceful argument viewing regional comprehensive universities as the unique institutions they are.

Dr. Gerald Lang and his colleagues discuss several important initiatives that are improving the quality of the academic experience for undergraduate students at West Virginia University.

Two papers in this year's monograph address faculty retirement. Ms. Valerie Conley addresses its potential impact on the academy and Dr. Charlotte Stokes discusses the challenges experienced when trying to fill vacancies left behind by faculty who have left the institution.

Next, Dr. Cavanaugh's paper defines a "blended mode university" and an enhanced strategic decision making process that has improved the coordination, delivery, quality of the academic program at the University of North Carolina – Wilmington.

In her paper on change and leadership, Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal focuses on the politics of leading for those college administrators who believe in the quality principles and want to move their institutions forward.

The final paper is Steve Janosik's *Synthesis and Epilogue,* presented as the closing program of the week-long conference. His remarks are meant to summarize the important issues raised during the week and are cross-referenced with the programs presented at the conference and the papers that appear in this monograph.

The conference program and participant list are also included in this monograph. Readers should note that a limited number of copies of our Monograph Series on Higher Education are available upon request. Additional information about EPI's Conference Series on Higher Education can be found at http://filebox.vt.edu/chre/elps/EPI/Quality/index.htm.

As a last note in this *Forward*, we want to thank David Martin for helping identify our international speakers and for his support while we were in England. His help with local arrangements was invaluable. We also wish to thank Pat Bryant for her work with pre-conference arrangements, for handling so many of the conference details, and helping make the conference such a rewarding experience for everyone.

S. Janosik
D. Creamer
M. D. Alexander

OXFORD AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GREAT BRITAIN

John Sayer
Tutor and Director of EU Tempus Programs at OUDES
Oxford University

You have invited me to introduce your program by giving a more or less impromptu inside and resident view of Oxford, and then to share thoughts on the Research and Assessment Exercise (RAE) that has come round again to obsess this university and every other one in the UK. I will try to relate what is distinctive in Oxford to the 'generic template' of the RAE.

Oxford University

Oxford is a divided city around and beside a collegiate university whose origins are obscure: monastic halls, four of which lay dubious claims to ninth century origins with King Alfred the Great of burnt cake fame; the city charter of 1155; English scholars summoned back in 1167 from the Sorbonne by Henry II in anger at the French support for Thomas à Becket. Whereas in Scotland there were five universities by the end of the Middle Ages, Oxford and a little later Cambridge were the only two universities in England until the nineteenth century; other emergent mediaeval universities like Northampton were suppressed. Some of the halls, of which there were about 120 in mediaeval Oxford, became funded corporations from about 1249. There are now 37 colleges (a few of them postgraduate only) and 3 halls of the university, another 6 permanent private halls of residence for the university's students, and a few others associated. The colleges are independent corporate bodies, as is the university, a public body with its charter of independence, distinct from most other European countries where universities are controlled by either State or Church. Oxford and Cambridge were for Catholic men until 1539, Anglican men thereafter until the second half of the nineteenth century, when dissidents and women began to be admitted, and professors openly married; hence the Victorian suburb of North Oxford, a mixture of women's colleges and largely professorial family homes. From 1974 on, all but one college became mixed.

Most members experience the university as a triangle: college, faculty and university. To become an undergraduate, you apply to study a chosen subject through a university-wide procedure to a particular college of your choice; you are interviewed there and may be offered a place conditional on school leaving examination results. A college will typically admit about 100 undergraduates each year, across all or most subjects. You are then matriculated to the university. A college tutor, quite probably one who interviewed and decided to take you on, will closely supervise your studies and the weekly college tutorial becomes central to studies. You are directed from the college towards university faculty lectures and laboratory work. So the college and each of its staircases is an inter-disciplinary academic experience, not just a hall of residence. It is crucially and uniquely a teaching body. It has its own library, its own traditions. Each tutor, whether resident or not, has a room in college as well as in a department. Mediaeval and mediaeval revival colleges have their own chapel and priest. The

college chapel of Christ Church also serves as the cathedral to the city. As a student, you belong to a college, the college gardens, sports fields, societies, dining halls and staircases, and it usually remains a lifelong association. You go out to the university to supplement tutorials to follow the university syllabus in your subject department or faculty, and to gain university qualifications along with undergraduates from the other 30 or more colleges. Your experience of the university as such will be the Bodleian and associated libraries, the Ashmolean and other university museums, the parks, and graduation in Christopher Wren's Sheldonian Theatre. As a graduate, you have the right in Convocation to share in electing the University Chancellor (an honorary figure) and the Professor of Poetry. Postgraduates from other universities apply the other way round, to the university department or faculty, and are then found a college, whether with or without undergraduates.

The University controls university staffing (academic & non-academic) funded from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC), whilst college staffing is by college appointment. As a university lecturer, you are appointed as an employee of the university by the faculty. You will be a member of Congregation, the ultimate decision-making body of the university at the end of its multifarious committees and councils. But you are also a senior common room member of a college, where you will be a tutor as part of your teaching work. Within the college, you may be elected a Fellow of the College, and share responsibility for its maintenance and development. Many of the older colleges are substantial owners of property and land; all attract and invest funds in their own right. The balance between college, department and university is for each individual to find. Probably half of the academics in Oxford are funded not from HEFC as part of the university-staffing establishment, but from short-term funds such as research and development grants, soft money. They sometimes feel disenfranchised.

Triangular, too, are the power-centers in the University: a Vice-Chancellor, by 4-year rotation, usually a college principal (12), rector (2), provost (2), warden (7), president (7), master (6), dean (1, not to be confused with deans of studies); the Chair of Faculty Board (now Divisional Board) and the Registrar, who runs the administration, once housed by the Bodleian, now hiding in the concrete shame which has vandalized Wellington Square.

I mention all this not just for you to notice as you move from Exeter or Jesüs College to the Ashmolean this morning, but when it comes to quality assessment, to illustrate the uniqueness of the institution, perhaps particularly the tutorial-centered teaching of Oxford. This is not a factory system, accepting raw material, processing it, and delivering a finished product, to be measured accordingly, with a counseling element to sustain the product, the process or the producer. It is a counseling-based learning and living process. In the competitive market of cost-effectiveness, the tutorial system is always in question: Can it survive? Should it? Is it equitable, internally or externally?

Externally, Oxford provides an example of contrasts in higher education. Until the 1990s, English and Welsh higher education were more or less in three parts: independent universities; polytechnics half-controlled by local authorities; and other colleges of higher education, some denominational, especially for the initial

education and training of teachers. So in Oxford, the Polytechnic was a pioneer of modular and flexible programs, and Westminster College was a Methodist foundation, moved from London in the 1950s, no doubt with the long-term aim of ever closer association with the university. Now all are independent corporations in the university sector, under higher education, coming from different backgrounds with different priorities. How do you measure such disparate institutions, other than by their own criteria? And if you are distributing funds, whether from the public purse or other sources, you have to measure by external criteria.

The UK Research and Assessment Exercise (RAE)

(All documentation is accessible through either *www.hfce.ac.uk* or *www.rae.ac.uk*.)

This seminar moves from the general scheme to a particular example, education. The RAE has developed through phases in 1992, 1996, and 2001. The higher education funding bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, HEFCE, SHEFC, HECW, and DENI conduct it jointly.

The stated primary purpose is:

> to produce ratings of research quality, which will be used by HE funding bodies in determining the main grant for resources to institutions they fund.

So it is not surprising if it seen by institutions also as essentially a question of ratings and fund distribution, with quality as a subordinate. The overall scheme is stated to be:

> based on peer review, not mechanistic. Panels will use their professional judgment to form a view about the overall quality of the research activity described in each submission in the round. They will form judgments in the context of statements and criteria for assessment prepared and published in advance, developed from a generic template provided by the funding bodies and in consultation with subject communities.

Declared principles for the RAE, and no doubt for research institutions also to follow are: clarity, consistency, continuity, credibility, efficiency, neutrality, parity, and transparency.

It is important to note the definition of research and what it excludes. It explicitly excludes development funding, such as the European Union TEMPUS schemes to which I am committed, and excludes some forms of scholarship. Those of us who view research and development as inseparable have to find ways to make development research-based and research focused on questions raised in development.

The scheme is organized in 69 units, each with panels and sub-panels. Panels consist of nominated persons respected in their field, and include users of research.

The content of submissions across all units includes a staff summary, details of research-active individuals, research output, research students and studentships, external research income, textual description of overall context and policy, and scope to include any other information thought appropriate. There are however limitations on length. Submissions include self-assessment, though not self-ratings. The ratings used began as from 5 (highest)-

1 (lowest), but have been refined to the current 5*, 5, 4, 3a, 3b, 2,1., 5* is for distinction by international standards.

The exercise requires a three- year cycle: the current example began in Spring 1999 when panels were formed, given to the end of 1999 to establish criteria for each unit. In July 2000 documents were due out to higher education institutions. Submissions were invited to include activities that in some areas could look back to 1994, but were likely to begin with 1996. A December 2000 deadline was set for research publications, no doubt engendering a rush to print in the 18 months available. 30 April 2001 was set for submissions, and December 2001 is the expected date for published results, a happy Christmas present for some, less happy for others. Early in 2002 there will be reports and feedback.

A Particular Example: Education and the University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies (OUDES)

The university has been committed to the postgraduate preparation of teachers for over a century, and to the study and development of education, centered on OUDES. The observations I offer here are from a personal perspective. Of about 40 academics located in OUDES, 20 are university appointed (17 FTE), others on soft money (direct to department) or short-term research grants or attached. They range from those whose prime purpose is to promote good teaching in schools to those who are mainly committed to research. Many from whatever part of that spectrum will have advanced degrees and doctoral teaching commitments.

HEFCE income is top-sliced for the university's contribution to its colleges, and is then distributed to departments, in our case on a 40/60 teaching/research basis. Research allocation across departments is based on the RAE assessment. Then there is an internal tax system (about 30%) to pay for infrastructure central services: it is calculated per student, per academic appointed by the university, and per square meter.

OUDES is involved with the RAE Unit of Assessment No. 68. This has a panel of 19 members, including one from a local education authority (LEA), one from industry, one serving schoolteacher, one for adult education, and one from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the government-appointed body which advises on the school examinations and curriculum, the context for which teachers are being prepared.

Each research-active member of the department submits evidence of the four research publications considered most appropriate, in terms both of quality and relevance to the department's general balance and direction. The RAE provides publication definitions and asks for structured added information - field of inquiry, audience, significance, theory/method.

This year, OUDES made 26 submissions. It will be noted that this exceeds the number appointed on the university establishment. It may also be of interest that not all on the university establishment are included - some may be seen purely in a teaching capacity. Quality of initial teacher training (ITT) had been OUDES' priority until the pressure on universities required at least as much emphasis on research. So in 1992, OUDES moved from RAE 2 to 4; in 1996 from 4 to 5. The result for 2001 is now awaited.

You will readily have predicted some effects. There is undoubtedly a modified focus and mission (also because it does not pay universities to be engaged in ITT - but we are still rated by government inspection as the best institution in England for teacher-training quality). The RAE affects our position in the university (and consequently the university view of education and teaching as a subject of study and research).

The financial impact of the RAE is very powerful; either research ratings will compensate for the uneconomic but highly successful scheme for preparing teachers, or it will undermine it. Brave attempts are made to reconcile conflicting priorities by seeking to focus research on issues central to teaching and to underpin teaching with research; the very strong links with schools create research opportunities and encourage school participation.

The RAE pressure is most obviously seen in staff appointments, both for replacement or new staff and for senior appointments. RAE has created a national transfer market and a burgeoning of professorships. New appointments are much more heavily based than before on research experience and publications and on previously completed research doctorates. OUDES has to swim with that tide, whatever other currents there may be. Its deputy director, very much the research leader, was drawn away to become director of the corresponding department at Cambridge, and has been replaced by an internationally recognized researcher of, rather than from, education. The current director, who represents a balance between research and teacher development, retires in two years' time. Previous directors have been drawn from fields of educational practice. This will be inconceivable in future; even though what will be needed above all is good leadership and management across theory and practice, the RAE will ensure that internationally recognized research becomes a priority, if not the key criterion.

I mentioned earlier Westminster College of Higher Education and its long-term aim of ever-closer association with the university. For many years, OUDES and Westminster College were drawn more closely together; the OUDES model of postgraduate initial teacher training was adopted also by Westminster College, and tutors of both institutions had mixed groups for the professional development program. It would make sense to envisage a combined school of education, and this was part of the proposed development plan. Why did it collapse? Perhaps in part because Westminster College overstretched itself financially, being afflicted like all teacher-training institutions by changed distribution of government funding. The main reason however will have been the university's refusal to accept a proposal that would in the long term have strengthened and made sense of enhanced estate and professional power, because its major preoccupation was present research ratings, and Westminster College was low on research capability. OUDES having lifted itself to the highest research rating, the only one of interest to what had become the leading research university, it would have been seen by the university as a whole to be either a step backwards or an unacceptable leap of faith to combine.

The short-termism induced by a combination of restrictive funding and of the RAE funding mechanism can be seen even nearer to home. OUDES remains small, and its university staff establishment is in danger of becoming smaller still. Its high standing is despite and not because of its resource-base. If external amalgamation is out of the question, it would make good

sense to consider deeper co-operative structures with other existing parts of the university. We have for example a separate Department for External Studies and Continuing Education, now magnificently endowed by the Kellogg Foundation and re-named officially as Kellogg College, unofficially and affectionately as "Corpus Crispy." It would make sense of a principle of lifelong learning for 'educational studies' and continuing education to be seen as one - indeed, the RAE panel recognizes this. It might also enable OUDES to become more competitive in attracting part-time advanced degree students, who at present find the additional required college dues prohibitive. But development rather than research excellence is the priority for Kellogg.

This illustrates another weakness in the RAE, and perhaps in our intellectual life more generally. Research is seen to be distinct from development. Funding for development is excluded from RAE criteria. If we consider what is to be the role of the university in society, research and development must be part and parcel of each other. Separate funding mechanisms weaken both. We see this in the European Union, which has separate funding structures for research and for development and no mechanism for bridging the two. OUDES endeavors to maintain its level of excellence in three areas: teaching quality, which is subject to peer review; quality of teacher training, which is additionally subject to detailed government inspection; and research, which is assessed separately. Each person and team in OUDES endeavors to maintain a proper balance across these three, and a professional view of quality would be about that balance both in the individual and in the department. But none of the three structures for assessment has any regard for that balance. There is a conflict between professional responsibility and specific accountabilities. There are differing notions of what is meant by standards. Accountability is appropriate and necessary if there is a question of standards in the sense of minimum acceptable levels. But it does not work as an inducement to the highest possible quality that is the professional aspiration.

Because of the spasmodic pressures of the RAE in particular, external credibility is endangered, in our case in schools and with local authorities. The RAE detracts from a university role in teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) at the very time when the local authorities' ability to support CPD has been severely reduced. In the 1980s, those of us who survived in the last remaining national representative education body, the Advisory Committee for the Supply and Education of Teachers, persuaded the government that all engaged in the training of teachers should themselves have "recent, relevant and substantial experience of teaching in schools," and those who did not were well advised to go and get it. Now the pendulum has swung in the other direction, and felt partnership with schools, a major plank of OUDES, becomes more difficult. The result nationally is a weakening of credibility of educational research. It is now easy for a maverick such as the recent chief inspector of schools, to rubbish educational research and not to be overwhelmed by a chorus of dissent from the education service.

Finally, to return to our particular university structure, the funding approach of which the RAE is a part has led to a focus on faculty and administrative management, largely to the exclusion of the colleges and college life, which is of overriding and lifelong significance to

those who experience it. Recent reforms in the wake of the excellent North report and the equally excellent Cooper Lybrand report on future development have all but excluded the college part of the triangle I referred to earlier. It has required a lot of political lobbying in the university and in parliament to maintain funding to students for their dues to the colleges which are hosting you today.

Discussion Issues

In general, the OUDES example may be seen as not unrepresentative of this university as a whole: it has improved its capacity to meet externally determined criteria. Its energies have been devoted and perhaps diverted to that end. As in education generally, caught in the accountability and measurement industry, we are ever more proficient in playing to the test. And we can all see that the opportunity costs are incalculable.

Among the general issues I hope to have drawn out you may perhaps wish to address some of the following:

- 'organic development' and mechanistic systems of measurement;
- the future role of universities in society;
- the place and nature of research;
- a generic template across diverse disciplines and institutions;
- the relationship or separation of research and development;
- accountability and professionality;
- how can we best assess assessment?
- the use of assessment in Darwinian economics: to those that have shall be given;
- what is valid evidence for quality?

In closing I wish to take us back to Oxford, and to a past student of Exeter College writing in '86 and regretting what was now happening:

> Since then the guardians of this beauty & romance so fertile of education, though professedly engaged in the higher education (as the futile system of compromises which they follow is nicknamed), have ignored it utterly, have made its preservation give way to the pressure of commercial exigencies, & are determined apparently to destroy it altogether. There is another pleasure for the world gone down the wind.....

Sorry, I should have said, not 1986, but William Morris, *The Aims of Art*, 1886.

OXFORD, BOLOGNA AND BRUEGEL'S BEE-MASTERS

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Executive Vice President
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Nature is so near: the rooks in the college garden
Like agile babies still speak the language of feeling;
By the tower the river still runs to the sea and will run,
And the stones in that tower are utterly
Satisfied still with their weight

"Oxford"
W.H. Auden

The structure of Higher Education in the different European countries shows a large variety. For students the contents and the length of University courses can be very different and of course different languages are spoken. Academic staff is confronted with different legislation, different procedures for appointments and tenure and very multiform tax legislation. It is generally accepted though, that further internationalization of teaching and research is a very important quality aspect for universities.

In 1999, 29 European Ministers of Education signed the Bologna Declaration. The purpose of this declaration is to homogenize European Higher Education to enhance exchange of students and staff within the European Community. The 29 ministers have chosen the two-cycled Anglo-Saxon model with a three-year bachelor and a one or two year master's degree. Since this, for most European universities, means a complete new structure for most of their courses. This unanimity of the 29 ministers is remarkable and the subsequent enthusiasm of universities even more so.

The declaration will of course also have implications on quality standards and quality assessment.

Discussions within Academe however, show an astonishing difference in expectations of the effects of the declaration. On the one hand no structural change at all is expected, the bachelor and master degree should only be regarded as different names for the same courses based on credit points, a merely so-called "cosmetic change." On the other side of the spectrum the most profound change in European Higher Education ever is expected: the free movement of people and work, the end of national boundaries and of a national identity of universities will indicate a new era for the academic world.

This poses also very interesting research questions on the characteristics of consistent and effective policymaking on such a large scale. These questions will be discussed in this paper, together with the effects on quality assessment of these changes and more in general the position of universities in society.

The Effects of the Bologna Declaration[1]

Not only do different countries have a variety of ideas on a national scale about what changes in policy and structure would be necessary to carry out the Bologna Declaration, also among universities in the Netherlands very different points of view occur. It is generally accepted however that in any scenario of change, the complexity of processes will be enormous. Some of the most difficult issues are:

- The length of the curriculum will have to be the same all over Europe.
- To guarantee that students can do a bachelor's degree in one country and a master's somewhere else, the level, quality and contents of the bachelor phase have to be compatible.
- The system for financial support of students is based on national policy-making and is different in each country.
- Only the Netherlands and Germany have the dual structure of polytechnics and universities.
- A lot of different languages are spoken in Europe.
- Legislation for the position of academic staff and taxation is also based on very complex national policymaking.

Besides all that, one has also to keep in mind that the European Parliament has no jurisdiction over national education policies.

As mentioned before, the difference in opinions about the effect of the declaration is astonishing. The advocates of change in Dutch universities expect the following developments.

The introduction of a bachelor's phase will put a new emphasis on a broader basis in undergraduate education. Several Dutch universities already have taken an initiative to start a liberal arts college, whereas in a traditional curriculum students start immediately with their major when they enter the University. Creative futuristic thinkers state that all undergraduate teaching will be organized in colleges in a few years and even those foreign universities or the corporate world and enterprises will "buy themselves into a University with their own college." They expect the majority of students to take a master's degree at another University. Since dual paths in terms of being a student and having a job at the same time, indeed is a rapidly growing phenomenon, it is also feasible that many students will leave the University for a few years after their bachelor's to work and come back for their master's. Needless to say that changes on a scale such as this will affect also the funding of universities. In the European realm ranking of universities and programs will become much more influential. According to articles in newspapers as a general impression of how the public opinion is on this subject, one can find a lot of articles that support this view.

University professors address the Minister of Education in public letters to stress their point of view that all opportunities to homogenize European Higher Education

[1] THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA, Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education Convened on the 19th of June 1999. See www.salamanca2001/documents

should be taken and financially supported by the government.

A year ago I also had the privilege to give a lecture here in Oxford, when this same conference was held at Mansfield College. We discussed how internationalization is a powerful stimulus for the enhancement of quality, since it puts an emphasis on international benchmarking and accreditation. I especially asked the participants' attention for innovation and change at several Spanish universities that impressed me at the time.

Only a week ago I read an article in a Dutch newspaper entitled "Spanish Masters." Among the 50 best MBA programs on the world-ranking list are six European programs, three of these in Spain. In the article Dutch students in Economical Sciences and Business Administration explained why following an MBA program in Spain in their discipline is one of the best strategic steps to make. I have little doubt that should I be here again in one year, I can add other disciplines to this kind of European ranking.

Maastricht University has started the first initiative to establish a trans-national University, a co-operative with the University of Hasselt-Diepenbeek in Belgium. We could not have imagined how extremely complicated it is to solve all the problems that result from the issues I mentioned above, we are sure however that if it were for the expertise we get in this process alone, it will be a unique selling point for our University.

On the other hand, this leads also to the point of view of groups in Academe that only expect a superficial change, if not only for the fact that it is simply too complicated and that bureaucracies have showed over decades that they can slow down the progress of change to a hardly noticeable speed. They regard it as metaphorical that the declaration was signed in Bologna, Europe's oldest University that has seen so many revolutions and is still there after 800 years.

Quality

In 1986 the Dutch national program to assess the quality of teaching was introduced. In this program a visiting committee of peers assesses each course every four to five years. This assessment by peers is based on a self-study report that covers a large list of data and topics that need to be described in the report. All courses in the same discipline at Dutch universities are visited during the same period. The visiting committee writes a public report in which each course is assessed and compared to others. The Association of Universities in the Netherlands carries out the whole program.

Fifteen years later it is evident that this system for quality assessment had a profound positive influence on management, culture and quality of teaching. Universities have each implemented tailor-made management procedures for the follow-up of these reports and have established a firmer relationship between the Board of the University and the deans in a decentralized context, with more autonomy and a more strictly formulated accountability for the deans.

Because of the fact that universities now have much more expertise and professionalism in quality management, there is also growing criticism on the national program for quality assessment. Universities add their own internal evaluations because they require more

explicit and critical assessment. Several Dutch universities are working out co-operatives with international partner-universities in a consortium. One of the advantages of such a consortium is the opportunity it offers for international benchmarking.

Fundamental Questions

At least for the past 25 years, universities all over the world have worked on evaluation, assessment, continuous quality management, accreditation and benchmarking. Have we however addressed sufficiently the fundamental questions on what we are teaching for and what standards for quality we offer our students and society as a whole?

In his Kohnstamm lecture[2] professor Kees Schuyt of the University of Amsterdam identified trends or phenomena in society that should be addressed by the educational system as a whole: primary, secondary and tertiary education. I will mention a few of these here:

- A further trend of individualism and mass education occurs at the same time. Numbers of students have grown enormously. Is endless standardized testing of students the answer to this? How can we foster personal growth of each individual student in our universities?

- We never found an answer to bureaucracies that deepen the gap between operational management and the values of educational professionals. Is the gap even widening?

- Among students, a growing tendency can be seen to "study for a job" and to calculate rationally what is needed. The economical perspective seems to become predominant for a growing number of students. Are we neglecting the enormous importance of broad or liberal education, of a lifelong search for wisdom and intellectual growth as manifestation of an "academic attitude?"

- Especially in Europe, one can pose the question if universities even started to integrate in their curriculum and student services the fact that our society has become much more heterogeneous and multicultural in a relatively short period of time.

To make these questions that we should ask ourselves as universities even more complicated, the nature or paradigm of teaching and research is the subject of much debate. In the economical sciences, concepts like *chance, risk, uncertainty* and *complexity* are regarded as essential characteristics, not only for their own discipline. Giving a closer look at these concepts one has to admit that they touch the roots of the paradigms we use for classical science: independent, analytical, the pursuit of truth.

Choices

As described earlier, the debate on the Bologna Declaration apparently does not follow a logical path. It is hard to predict how universities will change in the next decade, not even if we would only take this one parameter of the declaration into consideration. The outcome is uncertain; some universities will be at a risk because of international ranking. Will it be either the very innovative universities that face

[2] Schuyt, C.J.M., *Het onderbroken ritme*, Kohnstamm lecture, Vossiuspers AUP, Amsterdam 2001

chances and opportunities, or will students in this new extended market choose the classical old prestigious universities? The confused debate certainly illustrates that questions like these are of a complexity that we cannot handle easily. Isn't it curious though, that since research is our core business, that we are not engaged in shared planning of research that could direct and support further development. Research questions such as, "If we would start a new University today, in this new European and global context, what data would we need?" No doubt these will be very different parameters than we would have needed 25 years ago.

This almost paralyzing complexity also complicates to a far extent research-based policymaking in other sectors in society, for instance concerns about the natural environment in economical development, the expansion of aviation and concerns about the growing number of drop-outs in western society.

Roel in 't Veld[3] describes in his article the ways that politics and policy making are interwoven and that we have to reflect on epistemological questions if we want to improve the role or importance of research in large scale policy making. On the one hand, there is a lot of knowledge we do not use, because there is simply too much research-based information, or policymakers do not even know about all data that could be used. On the other hand, he argues, we still too easily think that *independence* is one the most important quality criteria for research. He advocates that since research in the social sciences is never free of values; we should before we start identifying the actual research questions, put a great effort in formulating what values are at stake.

[3] In 't Veld, R.J., (red.), *Willingly and knowingly*, Lemma publishers, Utrecht 2000

Going back to the Bologna Declaration I would like to open the discussion for the following thought-experiment:

Homogenizing European higher education by the introduction of two-cycled bachelor-master's programs is an illusion. Therefore the proposed plan is too much focused on merely structural changes. The Declaration leaves possibilities for a multitude of choices by different universities. Universities that do not want to change can simply adapt the credit transfer system and leave it at that. Other universities might want to grab the opportunity and try to find answers to a multitude of changes in our society. These choices are about values. Still the latter group will be very large and multiform and there is no apparent advantage in cooperation with so many other universities.

It seems to be more profitable when a group of, for instance, five European universities would work out the concept of a multinational University. As well complimentary education and research programs between universities, as predominantly similar programs could be the binding factor. In any case however, the primary reason for co-operation should have to be a comparable set of values as could be found for instance in mission statements. A parallel goal could be to reduce the gap between governance and Academe by asking researchers that are employed by these potential clusters of universities, to analyze proper research questions and carry out this research themselves.

Looking at Maastricht University the shared values that we are looking for could be:

- A leading innovative role in pedagogy of teaching, as in the concept of Problem Based Learning

- A strong regional oriented University, resulting in a strong relation with economical developments and the corporate world in the region

- An international focus as shown in least 20% foreign students and established international co-operation and exchange of academic staff.

- Personal growth of students parallel to intellectual growth as showed by contents of the curriculum and pedagogy of learning

- A creative and innovative culture based on the classical values of universities in terms of for instance the professor-student relationship.

- A sincere focus on social and societal needs, based on explicit notions of justice and equal opportunities

- A University that by it's geographical or social position is physically close to other cultures.

Conclusion

European universities will react very differently to the Bologna Declaration. These differences relate to different sets of values universities have in terms of ambitions, environment and policymaking.

Since many think that international experience, cultural sensitivity and the ability to speak several languages fluently are some of the most important quality aspects for graduates, we should find new ways for further international co-operation.

Small clusters of universities offer many advantages in facilitating together international student learning.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder drew his "Bee-masters" with pen and ink around 1567-1568.

The drawing has a very strange atmosphere: are these men without faces metaphorical? Are we looking at divine creatures taking care of *us*, the bees? At the same time they are good-natured monks, who do their everyday work with great devotion.

I would like to see this drawing as a metaphor for the role of universities in society through many centuries. The great scholars now and in our long past represent the highest intelligence and knowledge, while they go on with their teaching and research with the concentration and attention of medieval monks.

(with thanks to Bas Heijne, NRC newspaper 01 06 01)

MEASURES OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION – AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

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The debate on quality in higher education—in particular, at private colleges and universities—and the subsequent assessment of that quality will always conclude with two very simple notions. I want to state these two ideas at the outset.

1. Quality relates directly to who you are and want to be (if those are not one and the same), and this is as true for an individual as it is for a social unit or an institution of higher learning.

2. In any kind of assessment of quality, one must make sure that the individual, social unit or institution is the very center, the pivot, of the exercise of quality assessment.

Review of Recent Literature

In late spring, during the preparation of this paper, I was struck by the number of articles that passed my desk related to the subject matter we are discussing this week. To give you just a brief review, *Forum Futures 2001*, published in April by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) with generous support from Fidelity Investments, explores the future of higher education. In his article titled "The Outputs of Higher Education," David Breneman makes the point that "while it may be possible to assess with some degree of confidence the economic benefits of higher education, our ability to measure many of the alleged non-economic, social benefits of higher education is woefully inadequate."

In the same issue of *Forum Futures*, Paul Herr argues in his article on "Higher Education Institutional Brand Value in Transition: Measurement and Management Issues" that:

> Higher education leaders may derive guidance to manage effectively what may be the most important intangible asset a college or university owns—its long-term image . . . The institution's goal is not merely to attract the best students to attend the first day of classes, but rather to retain those students through graduation and beyond as loyal alumni. . . . so too might higher education benefit from focusing on establishing life-long ties with their graduates.

In yet another article in *Forum Futures*, "The Positional Arms Race in Higher Education," Gordon Winston of Williams College opines, "the higher the quality of the students with whom he or she is educated, the better a student's education will be. Thus, . . . college and universities want to maximize student peer quality to produce a higher quality education . . ."

In the same month, the Center of Policy Analysis of the American Council on Education (ACE) forwarded to all member presidents and me a report titled, *Measuring Quality: Choosing Among Surveys and Other Assessments of College Quality*. In his cover letter, Stanley O. Ikenberry, president of ACE, notes that this publication

was prepared "in response to increased demand for measurements of the quality of our institutions by the public and policy makers . . . "

In the May/June 2001 issue of *Trusteeship*, published by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), David Brooks' article on "The Moral Life of the Organization Kid" from the April *Atlantic Monthly* is singled out for mention in the "Perspective on the News" column, and Shirley Ann Jackson, president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, contributes a piece on the "Six Essential Elements of Transformational Change." Of direct importance for this conference, however, is the article by Tahlman Krumm, Jr., titled "Our Reputation Rests with the Reality of Results." He argues that "for too long, too many of us have relied on the reputational model of higher education, . . . An effective contemporary steward must be comfortable and conversant with realities of inputs, processes, outputs, and most important, outcomes." He also quotes from Joseph Burke:

> We academics are too good at criticizing the outcomes of outside organizations to plead the impossibility of evaluating our own performance. We may be able to persuade governors and legislators that only educators can evaluate the performance of higher education, but they will never accept the answer that it cannot be done.

Robert E. Martin, again in the same issue of *Trusteeship*, in his article, "The Vicious Spiral of Tuition Discounting," raises some questions about quality as well, as does the final note from John B. Lee on "The Tuition Subsidy is an Important Measure of Your Institution's Health."

Finally, in late spring, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in its *Liberal Education* magazine offers an excellent article by Douglas C. Bennett, president of Earlham College, on "Assessing Quality in Higher Education." (I must admit my rather spontaneous concurrence with Bennett's findings and, therefore, already submit my own prejudices on this entire topic for your scrutiny.) Bennett argues that the "value added" is the only valid measure of quality in higher education, although its assessment does pose difficulties. Not only does value have many dimensions, but also institutions are very different from one another and the effects of a collegiate experience unfold over many years. In addition, we cannot overlook complexity and cost as elements in any evaluation.

As a second-best strategy, we can assess outcomes. Bennett notes that we must also consider the "inputs and reputation" methodology, which is the approach used by *U.S. News & World Report*. The inputs are primarily focused on financial resources, faculty and student selectivity, and the outcomes are really only two measures—retention and graduation rates, which I believe are the most critical elements in any assessment of the quality of higher education. Bennett further explains "expert assessment," with the example of the *Templeton Guide*; "self-reports," such as the College Results Instrument; and finally, "processes and participation rates," as demonstrated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), an assessment sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The author concludes that he believes the *U.S. News & World Report* methodology to be flawed, but sees great hope and promise in the potential of the NSSE and Templeton efforts.

I have reviewed this recent literature for a few reasons. One is to indicate that in the span of just a few months, much new material was available to those who are interested in the subject. Second is to show that the topic we are considering at this conference is indeed timely and of concern to all of us. Furthermore, I wanted to illustrate that articles related to quality in higher education were most frequently found in a publication addressed primarily to the chief financial officers of institutions, and the second largest number were available in the publication geared to informing trustees. The smallest number appeared in documents intended for academicians.

Definitions of Quality by Stakeholder

Let me turn now to some of my own observations on the matter. Definitions of quality in higher education vary from one stakeholder to another—faculty, administrators, trustees, staff, students, parents, alumni, graduate and professional schools, future employers, and the surrounding community, all have definitions of quality that will vary at least in some small way and, in other instances, to a very large degree. Of course, all these definitions are directly related to expectations that can sometimes be stated quite clearly by the different groups. These differences can be very pronounced and even contradictory to one another on occasion. Let me try to cite a few examples.

When we describe the expectations of a faculty member at our respective institutions (albeit in a somewhat oversimplified fashion), we find that our colleague is hoping for an incoming class of curious and interested students; a small, but sufficient (i.e., critical) mass of majors in his or her area, who excel in writing (hence reducing the arduous task of correcting their many essays) and are willing to be mentored; and a schedule that is not repetitive, but is predictable, with no more than two different preparations and at least one upper-level course in his or her field of interest, to enable him or her to remain current with the literature in the field and continue with some research. In addition, the faculty member's expectations will include the firm hope that the chair of the department will assign only a select number of advisees, the travel funds in the dean's office will have been increased so as to permit attendance at one additional conference to deliver one more paper, and the upcoming sabbatical will not be adversely affected by any new policies. Our colleague also expects not to have too many committee assignments, except in those years preceding a promotion and/or tenure review, at which time "service" to the community will be observed and judged more carefully. For some of our faculty, there is the need for an opportunity for scholarship and support for publications. For many others, the expectation is that "good teaching" will always fill the lacunae or gaps in their record of scholarship or service categories.

Beyond that, our faculty member expects reasonable office hours and a pleasant working environment with adequate technology and preferably not too far removed from the parking lot. Naturally, a compensation package that includes salary increases at a rate above the consumer price index (CPI), good medical insurance and a pension plan are among the classic and more common expectations of faculty. Above all, however, a general sense a well-being is expected, which arises from the hope that nothing will change during their tenure to disrupt any of the above conditions.

Do not presume me to be too harsh here—I want to balance the picture somewhat more. Faculty are the critical component and stakeholder in our institutions, and in the long run, whether we know what quality is

or how to measure it, we all realize that quality in higher education, particularly in general liberal arts education settings, is always directly related to the quality of the exchange or the conversation (it is my preference to express liberal education in this form) between faculty and students. To me, therefore, it is clear that the task of the president and everyone else on campus, from trustees to the custodial staff, is to work to facilitate and enhance faculty-student interaction.

When this happens, you will observe that, in addition to all of the above, good faculty expect the following: satisfaction with improved pedagogy, regardless of whether it is derived from the assistance of technology, librarians or other staff; gratification in the form of gaining a research grant that will advance understanding of their own subject matter; great pride in recognition by peers in their profession resulting from leadership roles in academic associations; success of their alumni, who gain acceptance to good graduate programs or enter the marketplace in solid entry-level positions; a sense of responsibility in playing a role in the committee and governance structure of their institution, from the department to faculty senate; and their role as mentors to junior colleagues. These are the expectations of a conscientious faculty member and colleague, and for him or her, they measure the quality of the institution and the work performed therein.

The second group of stakeholders—and equal in importance to faculty—is students. Their primary expectations are, predictably, related to being accepted at their college of choice, which is hopefully at a level of reputational prestige that will be simultaneously satisfactory to both their parents and their peer group. Next, they expect a good roommate, if it is a residential setting, and immediate acceptance into a group with whom they can socialize. They can compromise on residences and food, but their class schedules must fit conveniently with other commitments, such as a part-time job, sports or a hobby. Five classes may be just fine, if not all of them call for a long reading list, and the range of academic expectations is varied, if not unknown, at the first-year level.

However, by senior year, students expect meaningful contact with faculty; they want to be challenged, at least in the subject matter of their major; they expect to be able to discuss applications of what they have learned; and beyond academics, they wish to identify real friends, real issues and concrete goals to carry them forward into their own futures. Some students expect engagement in civic, social or voluntary activities that will stretch their concern for people and issues, and they really do not mind working hard in subjects they like or for faculty members who have shown an interest in them. Also, by their final year, the majority of graduates in our schools are satisfied with the reputation of their alma mater, and many are even proud of the association.

Another group of very important stakeholders are the trustees or directors of our institutions of higher learning. They, of course, expect the college or university "to do well," which can be demonstrated to a large number of them by a balanced budget; successful fund-raising efforts; positive media stories on events, people on campus (whether they be students, staff or faculty) or athletics; great ratings in the media, such as *U.S. News & World Report*; a good incoming class, at least in numbers; and strong leadership on the part of the president, which is present when all of the above occur. For the trustees, effective leadership is also extant when the following do not happen: faculty unrest over salaries, handbook issues or staffing numbers; employee concerns about out-sourcing; complaints about insufficient technology;

increases in financial aid; or the sudden appearance of the consequences of deferred maintenance. Trustees prefer an idyllic picture of the institution for which they are responsible. Above all, they do not wish to hear about parents' complaints. Yet, at the same time and more seriously, trustees or directors are confident about the future if they themselves can explain—no matter how broadly—what the vision is for their college or university. When they have a firm grasp of some of the key elements of the strategic planning at the institution and some familiarity with specific and concrete action items in both the vision and strategy, that knowledge is their barometer for the quality of the institution.

These are mere examples of three groups of stakeholders, and I hope that our conversation this afternoon will lead to discussion of what we as academic officers and presidents expect regarding this extremely complex issue. It is my personal belief that for the vast majority of stakeholders, quality is nothing more than the quantitative extension or explanation of the expectations each has about the institution. When a meaningful operational definition is formed for quality in institutions of higher learning, it will always have to be a composite picture of what the largest number of stakeholders agree are the key characteristics of the mission of the institution, the vision and the strategy to achieve it. The connection between the measurement of quality and the mission is critical.

Conclusion

My personal view on assessment always returns to the same conclusion: the best—and, so far as I am concerned, the only valid—index to be used in assessing a college education and an institution's success in providing that education is exemplified by retention and the subsequent graduation rate. More than anything else, the graduation rate indicates how well a college or university is serving its students.

First, the graduation rate reflects the efforts of all those involved in the marketing and admissions process as well as the judgment of the staff and faculty who make the final determination to permit a student to enter a particular institution. Next, this measure shows how effective the work of the faculty and staff—we particularly need to include staff in the context of a residential institution—has been with students attending over a four-year period. And finally, the graduation rate obviously demonstrates the performance of the students and the fulfillment of their potential, identified during admission. Thus, if the admission process is in line with the stated mission of the institution; if the faculty maintain the standards promulgated in their own multiple publications and those of the institution; if students' work is evaluated according to those standards; and if all educational aspects embodied in a particular college's mission are, indeed, valued and evaluated, then the graduation rate will be the best indicator of the overall quality of the institution.

In some ways, it is impossible to deviate from the mission of an institution. For instance, if a college is intent on educating only the top ten percent of the student population and only in sciences, then clearly, it will select its students accordingly. If an institution includes not only academic qualifications in their admission standards, but also character, values, particular religious beliefs, athletic performance, volunteer service or multiple other non-academic aspects in accepting students, then these, too, will become part of the total evaluation of the students and should be reflected in the successful graduation rate. As another example, if an institution is primarily geared to provide a

residential experience, then obviously, failure to retain students in the residences indicates something about the priorities of the college regarding those residences. Therefore, a complete and holistic picture of an institution is indeed best realized if we can operate on the assumption that intellectual honesty was in force in the description of the mission of college, if that same intellectual honesty prevailed when students were accepted, and if the faculty and staff have evaluated the progress of students along intellectual growth curves. Then, general educational growth expectations can be confirmed.

There is no doubt that quality in higher education and assessment of that quality will remain a complex phenomenon because—as noted in my earlier remarks—it is primarily related to where stakeholders fit into the overall picture of the institution. The frustration of any academic administrator or leader in an academic community will always lie in the fact that some of the expectations of different stakeholders will be at odds.

For example, if the faculty anticipate that they will have fewer students in their classes, fewer advisees will be assigned to them, and fewer courses will be their responsibility in a given academic year, these expectations will be in direct opposition to ones suggested by financial administrators, who will make solid arguments based on good economic reasons that to sustain the viability of the institution, the number of students in each class should be increased from twelve to fifteen, the number advisees should be increased from ten to fifteen, and the course load should be two more than what is currently expected in an academic year.

In this fashion, we can very quickly illustrate how issues of quality in higher education will always and immediately relate to financial constraints. Thus, in the long run, whether we like it or not, in an academic environment, we will have to come to accept the fact that one other serious assessment possibility—in addition to the more qualitative one suggested above in terms of the graduation rate—will be the composite financial index (CFI). This particular index will make it possible for academic leaders to make balanced judgments between the conflicting interests of different stakeholders, and in that balance rests the individual success of an institution in the marketplace.

All colleges and universities are involved in an "arms race," Gordon Winston argues in *Forum Futures*, particularly private institutions, and this arms race is without end. Therefore, a careful balance between what is needed for survival with what is needed to excel will always be a key element in evaluating what is qualitatively right for an institution.

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MEASURING QUALITY IN REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES: A CALL FOR APPROPRIATE STANDARDS

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Although a very large percentage of American post-secondary students are educated in regional public universities, such institutions, their students and their missions are largely ignored when objective measures of excellence are devised. At one end of the spectrum are exclusive private liberal arts institutions with measures such as size of endowment, test scores of entering students and four- or six-year graduation rates. At the other are large public, tier-one research universities with such indices of quality as doctoral degrees conferred, number of externally funded research projects, size of enrollment and prowess of athletic teams.

In mid-spectrum, however, quality measures are usually a fuzzy blending together of those used at either end of the rainbow. And, seen from one perspective, there is a certain logic to this, for regional universities are difficult to define except through comparison to their colleague institutions.

Similar to the private institutions in size — generally two to eight thousand students — they have limited program offerings usually with a heavy emphasis upon "core" areas—science, mathematics, literature, history, political science and the arts. However, they tend to focus upon a few highly concentrated professional areas at the undergraduate level— business, teacher preparation, nursing or applied technology. Their students—less selectively chosen than those at the privates—are frequently first-generation, career-oriented, less well to do financially and less worldly. They bring fewer social- and career-enhancing networks with them than do students at other types of institutions. Because these students are different, the instruction and institutional culture and mission are necessarily different as well.

Similar to the large public research institutions, regional universities are tax-supported, legislatively created and controlled, subject to public scrutiny, mandates and politically appointed governing bodies. They are often expected to have the same values, goals and aspirations as their larger brethren—development of significant and significantly funded research programs, attraction of acclaimed faculty and increasing student enrollment. Yet they must hope to accomplish such ends with smaller student enrollments, much smaller budgets, a higher undergraduate-to-graduate ratio and alumni who have attained neither the prominence nor the institutional bonds of those at more prestigious universities. Regional universities tend to produce nurses rather than doctors, mid-level executives rather than CEO's, teachers rather than lawyers and technologists rather than Nobel laureates.

Given such characteristics, it is important to recognize these are not indicators of quality, but of mission. Before quality measures can be devised, a workable statement of mission is needed; this, in turn, will allow a sensible set of goals to be established. Quality of specific institutions can then begin to be determined based upon their degree of success at achieving these common goals.

What is the mission of the regional university? Education of students, of course, but particularly the education of students primarily from a definable geographic region, often students from lower- to mid-range economic backgrounds, often students below the top 5% of academic accomplishment, often students of a broader age range than traditionally found in university students, often students who are less interested in intellectual stimulation than in preparation for a lucrative career, and often students of ethnic groups not well represented in either research or private universities.

Given such a student population, teaching assumes a degree of importance not traditionally found on university campuses. These students are certainly intellectually capable, but have to be moved farther than the top 5%. They have often not had access to either the best teaching nor the best facilities in their K-12 careers, and—while they are intensely interested in the financial rewards that statistically accrue to the educated—they are often very resistant to and suspicious of education itself. Innovative, patient, committed faculty quite different from the crusty curmudgeons of academic legend must do effective teaching of such students.

Assuming the education of students as the core of the regional university's mission, what of the position of research—again one of those central functions of universities? Rather than "pure" or "basic" research, the regional university is likely to encourage and support research, first, for its value in improving teaching, and, second, for its potential transferability to application, i.e. "applied research." Rather than being at the heart of the university, research at the regional university is peripheral to and supportive of teaching; therefore, regional universities seldom seek or receive the large lucrative research grants that are key to the growth and development of research universities.

If teaching is primary and research is secondary in such institutions, how does the generic mission statement for the regional university incorporate these characteristics? Such a statement might be:

> the mission of the institution is to provide effective classroom instruction for an intelligent but often under-prepared student body, to encourage the development of intellectual inquiry and critical thinking in such students, to prepare them for entry-level positions in specific professions, to develop research activities which support and enhance classroom teaching. Additionally, opportunities should be created that encourage the development of leadership and citizenship skills. A systematic program for student recruiting, retention and graduation will be updated regularly to address the changes in the student population. Faculty who understand the mission of the university will be recruited, retained and adequately compensated.

While this might be a realistic mission statement for regional universities, it is unlikely to ever find its way into print, primarily because such catch phrases as "excellence," "unique," or "student-oriented" are absent.

However, using such a generic mission statement as a point of departure, measures of quality must be based upon its core elements. The first of these is providing "effective classroom instruction for an intelligent but often under-prepared student body." There are two quantitative issues

here: measuring the effectiveness of classroom instruction, and establishing the level and quality of student preparation. While there are many major instruments available for universities to use in measuring various qualities in their students (a 2001 publication of the American Council on Education, *Measuring Quality: Choosing Among Surveys and Other Assessments of College Quality*, for example, identifies 13 major instruments—11 of which are nationally normed—that measure student attitudes, expectations and level of satisfaction with the undergraduate experience), there are fewer which measure instructional effectiveness.

Internally, universities generally use some mix of present and former student evaluations of courses, professor peer review, administrator evaluation and instructor self-evaluation to attempt to come to grips with the quality issue in teaching. The complexity of the blend may be seen either as a lack of faith in the accuracy of any of the measures or as a serious recognition of the complexity of teaching. While the ACE document mentioned above identifies 13 ways to measure student attitudes, it lists only five that purport to measure actual student achievement. Of these five, the ETS Major Field Tests and ACAT (Area Concentration Achievement Tests) focus upon a specific field of study—but not upon a specific course—while the other three assess either "general education skills" or "higher order thinking skills."

While field evaluation is valuable as students approach the conclusion of their undergraduate work and information about critical thinking skills might be useful anytime, neither speaks particularly well to the issue of quality of instruction in individual classes. This is further exacerbated by the fact that 80%-90% of students graduating from regional universities will have taken classes from at least two—and frequently several—different institutions before graduating. It is thus very difficult to determine what skills and knowledge were acquired where.

This is an equally difficult dilemma when attempting to measure the second core mission element: "to encourage the development of intellectual inquiry and critical thinking." The ETS Tasks in Critical Thinking, while not nationally normed, does purport to measure "college-level inquiry, analysis and communication skills." However, it is relatively expensive to administer—$16.50 per student—and is evidently most useful when administered to relatively small—200-500—groups of students. It is ironic that "critical thinking," which looms so large in pedagogical discussions, has been given such short shrift in the evaluation process.

Our third core mission—"to prepare graduates for entry-level positions in specific professions"—is far more easily quantified but time consuming to measure. It requires follow-up on each graduate, and, if one assumes a certain degree of professional success is equally desirable, longitudinal follow-up as well. To accomplish this is a straightforward but expensive task. However, there are caveats here as well. First, as regional universities are encouraged to develop new programs in response to marketplace demands, it must be kept in mind that many of those needs disappear as quickly as they appear. Second, many professionals voluntarily move from field to field. Finally, a certain number of graduates choose the path of least resistance to a degree with no intent of ever working in their "chosen" profession.

The fourth mission element—"to develop research activities which support and enhance classroom teaching"—is somewhat deceptive. The usual measures of research activity—dollars generated and quantity of scholarly publications—are useful but not entirely accurate when "supporting and enhancing classroom teaching" are added qualifiers. In the typical research institution, research is primary and teaching secondary. In the regional university, the order is reversed. Practically, this means both the scope and role of research changes; it is more likely to be applied rather than basic; it may well involve pedagogy regardless of discipline; it is far less likely to be funded at significant levels.

Achieving success at research thus qualified means more than totaling dollars and counting pages; it means demonstrating the link between the research activity and the classroom, and, if possible, exhibiting its impact upon curriculum as well as student performances.

The sixth mission element—"encouraging the development of leadership and citizenship skills"— again underscores the differences among these types of university. The private liberal arts college with its affluent students who bring with them parental networks of success and expectations of leadership is very different from the public regional institution. The regional university student is often first-generation and is from a family with little or no tradition of philanthropy or civic involvement. "Leadership" to such students takes place somewhere else; "they" are in charge and "they" make the decisions. These students and their families expect to play no significant role in public affairs. At the other end of the spectrum—the prestigious research institutions—admission is extremely competitive and admission itself, much like admission to medical school, in essence guarantees success and the assumption of leadership roles.

Consequently, the regional university has two civic responsibilities: first to create training opportunities for its students, and second to ensure their participation in those opportunities. Considering these students' ages vary considerably, they are often suspicious of anything not done "for credit"; they have little experience—with the possible exception of their church—with civic involvement; they often have little sense of the campus as a community—it is clear traditional undergraduate clubs and activities will hold little attraction for them.

Yet citizenship, participatory citizenship, is a core goal for the regional university. How this is achieved will vary, but success is measurable. Unfortunately, success tends to be measured on the basis of "power" positions achieved—how many presidents, senators, et cetera—rather than how many city councilmen, how many seats on philanthropic boards, how many charitable efforts would dissolve if these graduates did not exist.

The seventh core element of the mission is closely related to the sixth. "A systematic program for student recruiting, retention and graduation will be updated regularly to address the changes in the student population." Regional universities cannot be mired in the past; their responsibilities are to address current needs of current students, often needs which those prospective students do not yet realize. In practical terms this means selling, not just the specific institution, but education itself. It also means holding the student in the educational process until he or she

completes a degree. While this sounds simple, it is important to remember that these students often have chronic financial difficulties, lack an extensive family support system and are easily discouraged by academic rigor. Therefore, to keep completion rates high, the regional university must create a support system—financial, personal and academic—for these students who would be quite unnecessary for a different student body. Such systems will also consume significant resources that must be drawn from other areas of the institution.

When measuring recruitment, retention and graduation rates—all of which are typically measured at every type institution—it is particularly important to point out that six-year graduation rates, the most frequently used measure, has little utility for regionals. Although differences in student population, age, expectations, et cetera, account for part of this lack of utility, its major weakness is simply that most graduates did not begin their undergraduate career at the institution from which they receive their degrees. A far more revealing and useful measure would be the percentage of the total undergraduate enrollment— regardless of when or where they began—who are graduated each year.

The final mission element—recruiting, retaining and adequately compensating faculty who understand the mission of the regional university—is trickier than it seems. Certainly faculty retention and compensation are easily, and frequently, measured; however, finding faculty who understand, appreciate and respect the mission of regional universities is difficult.

Most faculty members receive their doctorates from research-oriented universities, and, as do most good students, try to emulate their professors. In practice this means finding positions at research universities, teaching doctoral students rather than undergraduates and spending the bulk of their professional careers focused upon research rather than upon students. In this scheme, only those who have perished by not publishing are relegated to the slag heaps of the regional universities. Legislators, without understanding academic dynamics, become co-conspirators in furthering this perspective by providing funding at much higher rates—which translate into much higher faculty salaries—for the research institutions. Thus, working at a regional is not only an academic and intellectual demotion, but a financial one as well. Demonstrating that in fact regional universities provide opportunities for satisfying and rewarding careers can be quite challenging.

Finally, two major issues confront regional universities. First, typical traditional measures of quality all too often are simply not applicable to such institutions, and, if used, give distorted and inaccurate pictures of their real level of quality. Second, as discussed above, new and uniform measures of quality must be devised if true assessment is to occur. Quality of teaching, impact upon students, having successful graduates who are active participants in society— all those areas already detailed are central to the mission of such institutions and should become the core of evaluation.

Such different evaluation systems are familiar to us— sports cars, dump trucks, helicopters and bicycles are all vehicles, but it would never occur to us to evaluate them all using a single standard. However, we are currently assuming all universities are Ferarris and are using evaluation standards that make perfectly serviceable Fords and Chevrolets look inadequate.

Let's at least be as sensible in measuring quality in education as we are in measuring quality in automobiles.

A CASE STUDY IN CHANGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS

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West Virginia University, like other institutions of higher education, strives to be recognized for its commitment to providing high quality educational programs, thus fostering academic excellence both in its faculty and its students. Students and their parents demand high quality programs and often use "quality" as a metric in making decisions about which college to attend. Faculty want to be part of a high quality program, knowing that this will enhance their reputation and career development. The general public expects academic institutions to be of high quality, particularly those they support through their tax dollars.

Mechanisms have been put into place to judge and certify the quality of higher education institutions. A variety of national rankings purport to rate the overall quality of institutions and to identify the highest quality institutions for a given discipline. Academic institutions are also accredited by organizations known as regional accreditation agencies, such as the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement that accredits West Virginia University. Some degree programs such as business and engineering have professional organizations that accredit the specific degree programs of those colleges. At the local level, the West Virginia University Board of Governors reviews each academic program once every five years for the quality of the curriculum and the viability of the program. These various "stamps of approval" are very important in attracting students to enroll and in their job placement after graduation.

Given this context, it is easy to understand why raising academic standards and expectations is so critical to an institution of higher education. There is, however, a cultural heritage to an institution's overall curriculum, especially the general studies core component of the curriculum. And with that heritage comes budget and personnel implications. Thus, changing academic expectations, much less standards, is a heroic task. In this paper we describe the effort expended by West Virginia University to implement a series of curricular changes to enhance the academic quality of the institution's degree programs.

The WVU Commission on Academic Standards and Expectations

When David C. Hardesty assumed the presidency of West Virginia University in 1995 his first major initiative was to transform the undergraduate student life experience to make the University more student-centered. The outcome of this effort was a suite of programs that operate under the umbrella name of Operation Jump-Start. Some of the components of the program include: Fallfest, a major welcome-back festival and outdoor concert hosted for returning students on the first night of class each fall; the Resident Faculty Leaders program which places oversight of the academic events and student life activities in the residence halls under faculty direction; New Student Convocation which is held the Sunday before classes begin for the purpose of conveying academic expectations in a formal environment; and WVUp All Night, an innovative entertainment program operated on week-end evenings for students. The Jump-Start program has been a huge success in terms of creating a new culture in which students live and learn at WVU.

In 1998, following these efforts to change the student life experience, President Hardesty established the Commission on Undergraduate Academic Standards and Expectations to review the academic goals and expectations West Virginia University has for its undergraduate students. The Commission was co-chaired by Provost Gerald Lang and was composed of WVU faculty, students, and administrators as well as members of the general public, parents, public school teachers and administrators, and a member of the West Virginia Office of the Secretary of Education and the Arts. This broad-based group conducted a study of the undergraduate education literature and administered surveys to WVU faculty and students to ascertain the state of undergraduate education at West Virginia University as it relates to national trends.

Sub-committees of the Commission were formed to synthesize the information gathered and to develop initial recommendations for consideration. Following a lengthy meeting during which each sub-committee shared its findings and recommendations, Provost's Office staff drafted an overall report including the Commission's recommendations. This draft was shared with the Commission and, based upon feedback, was further refined. The outcome of this effort was a Draft Report that was broadly shared with the campus for comment. Following a public comment period, additional modifications were made and a final report was subsequently submitted to President. The campus community acknowledged the final report as being broadly representative of current thought and issues. The final report is available at:

http://www.wvu.edu/~acadaff/commission.htm

The Implementation Process

The recommendations were reviewed and considered by the University faculty and administration over the past two years. A process was developed that resulted in appointment of a special committee to address an implementation plan for each major recommendation. The various committees were composed of individuals who had knowledge of the topic under consideration. Membership was usually composed of faculty from across the campus and representatives of the administration. Their task was to develop a policy statement that would give life to the

recommendation and to also develop appropriate procedures that would make it functional should it be approved. Thus, this process occurred within the normal governance structure. Using the traditional approval process garnered strong support from the campus community. The efforts to implement the recommendations of the Commission are described below.

1. Create an Undergraduate Education Mission Statement

The Commission recommended that West Virginia University develop an Undergraduate Education Mission Statement, addressed to present and prospective students and their parents, which clearly delineates how an education at West Virginia University benefits its graduates. An ad hoc committee representing Academic Affairs; Enrollment Management; and the Senate Curriculum, Student Instruction, and Liberal Studies Program Committees crafted a mission statement that was approved by the Faculty Senate.

The Mission Statement for Undergraduate Education at WVU is being incorporated into the information sent to prospective students and their parents to promote their understanding of the value of a WVU undergraduate education. WVU faculty and staff are encouraged to keep this mission statement in mind as they develop and teach their courses and work with undergraduate students.

2. Develop an Integrated First-Year Experience

As referenced previously, Operation Jump-Start focuses primarily on student life outside of the classroom. The Commission concluded that more attention needed to be given to the first-year academic experience if it is to launch WVU's undergraduates more effectively into a successful undergraduate experience. The Commission recommended that WVU extend its commitment to undergraduate education by focusing on classroom-based activities. An ad hoc committee representing Academic Affairs; the Senate Curriculum, Student Instruction, and Liberal Studies Program Committees; and College/Department Academic Administrators moved this recommendation forward by proposing several steps that were approved by the Faculty Senate.

WVU Undergraduate Education Mission Statement

WVU undergraduate students take advantage of the unique instructional, research, and service opportunities at West Virginia's only Land-Grant Research University. Choosing from among a great variety of academic and student-life experiences, they obtain the comprehensive education required to succeed in a changing and complex career environment, to achieve enriching personal lives, to respect individual differences, and to serve as responsible citizens.

While pursuing an undergraduate degree at WVU, students will have the opportunity to:

- Acquire the essential knowledge and skills in their majors to excel in their careers or to succeed in graduate or professional schools
- Gain hands-on exposure to the latest technology in their areas of specialization

- Solve problems through creative and critical thinking
- Express complex ideas in a variety of ways, including through the written and spoken word
- Continue professional and personal growth with a spirit of inquiry and a zest for life-long learning

- Benefit from the uniqueness of the Research University by partnering with faculty scholars engaged in advancing knowledge through scholarly activity
- Take advantage of the Land-Grant University's direct and continuing contact with West Virginia's citizens and communities through Extension, continuing education, service learning, and other outreach programs
- Complement their academic experiences through structured out-of-classroom programs and services that clarify personal values and individual identities, support intellectual growth, and contribute to sound interpersonal relationships
- Advance their understanding and respect for human dignity and appreciation of individual differences
- Prepare to serve as leaders and responsible citizens, respectful of the environment and conscious of their impact on the local and global community

As the ad hoc committee considered the first-year experience they came to believe that inquiry-based learning should be the theme that ties the various components together. Thus the first step was to define critical thinking. Other more specific activities followed from this defining theme.

Working Definition of "Critical Thinking"

One goal espoused in the Commission's report is to give first-year students an appreciation for an inquiry-based approach to learning that will give them the skills to become critical thinkers. For the University to have a common definition of "critical thinking," the Faculty Senate adopted the following statement that was developed by the ad hoc committee.

> Critical thinking, as defined by the National Council of Teachers of English, is "a process which stresses an attitude of suspended judgment, incorporates logical inquiry and problem solving, and leads to an evaluative decision or action.

Critical thinkers ask questions, uncover assumptions, define terms, distinguish between facts and opinions, separate the relevant from the irrelevant, make detailed observations, and make assertions based on sound logic and solid evidence. The following table gives more specific attributes of critical thinkers.

Attributes of Critical Thinkers

- Assess statements and arguments
- Are able to admit a lack of understanding of information
- Have a sense of curiosity
- Are interested in finding new solutions
- Are able to define clearly a set of criteria for analyzing ideas

- Are willing to examine beliefs, assumptions, and opinions, and weight them against facts
- Are able to separate generalities from specifics
- Listen carefully to others and are able to give feedback
- See that critical thinking is a lifelong process of self-assessment
- Suspend judgment until all facts have been gathered and considered
- Understand the relationship between explanatory theory and relevant observable data
- Are able to adjust opinions when new facts are found
- Look for proof
- Examine problems closely
- Are able to reject information that is incorrect or irrelevant

As the state's land-grant research institution, WVU should strive to provide opportunities for an inquiry-based education that develops critical thinking skills in its students. Thus faculty, especially those who teach first-year courses, are urged to incorporate some components of critical thinking in their courses. Critical thinking is a keystone component of the Liberal Studies Program (LSP) courses and the LSP Audit (described in a forthcoming section) focuses on assessing the degree to which this goal is being achieved.

Requiring an Orientation Course of all First-Year Students

Effective study skills, time management skills, responsible behavior and academic planning are considered to be important factors in the academic success of first-year students. These skills are the focus of WVU's Orientation course. Effective Fall 2002, all first-year students not transferring at the sophomore level will be required to take UNIV 101 (the Orientation Course) their first semester at WVU and every subsequent semester until they pass the course. Colleges and schools that have their own specific orientation courses may petition for these courses to substitute for UNIV 101 provided their syllabi contain certain core elements: (a) Orientation to the University; (b) Time Management and Study Skills; and (c) Social issues [these topics may be addressed by students attending evening meetings conducted by members of the Office of Residential Education or other experts in these topics].

Requiring that all first-year students enroll in an orientation course will help set the foundation for strong, long-term academic performance by establishing basic performance expectations such as class attendance and attendance at WVU-sponsored events that foster intellectual development. The orientation course will also establish behavioral expectations, both inside and outside the classroom, that contribute to success, both personally and as part of a global society.

Attendance Policy for First-Year Courses

It is common knowledge that students who attend class regularly perform better academically. Sometimes first-year students do not realize that it is in their best

interests to attend class. With the concurrence of the Faculty Senate, the following statement has been added to WVU's attendance policy:

> There is a strong correlation between regular class attendance and academic success. Faculty are strongly urged to require attendance in all 100-level classes.

Successful students come to realize over time that what happens in the classroom is a very important component of the learning experience. Each faculty member who requires attendance in a 100-level class will be contributing to a first-year student's understanding of the importance of class attendance.

Learning Communities and Linked Courses

Many universities have developed learning communities where first-year students who live together in the residence hall take a course or courses together as a group. These students do much better academically because of peer support. The "Live and Learn" floors in the residence halls for first-year students represent WVU's efforts in this arena. In Fall 2001, there will be five Live and Learn floors: (a) Pre-Business and Economics; (b) Engineering; (c) Career Exploration; (d) Pre-Health Sciences; and (e) Forensic Identification.

Several institutions have taken this concept one step further, linking two or more courses intellectually by having a common theme running through them. For example, a group of pre-health science students could take the same sections of BIOL 115 and ENGL 101 together in their first semester. The faculty teaching these course sections would coordinate their course work, borrowing themes from each other's courses and providing assignments that would develop critical thinking skills. The ad hoc committee was impressed by the apparent success of learning communities and continues to study the possibility of developing and implementing linked courses for WVU's first-year students.

An Academic Plan for All First-Year Students

As recommended by the Commission, all advisors of first-year students received a memo instructing them to work with their advisees to develop an academic plan. This plan is intended to help students understand better the course requirements for a degree, thus helping students graduate in a timely manner. The academic plan will be reviewed regularly for continued progress by the student and advisor, and a new copy of the plan will be given to the student whenever a change is made.

3. Establish a Capstone Experience in Every Undergraduate Degree Program

The Commission recommended that a capstone experience be required in every undergraduate degree program offered by WVU. An ad hoc committee composed of a Senate Curriculum Committee sub-committee; faculty representatives from programs with a capstone experience; faculty representing programs without a capstone experience; and a representative from Academic Affairs crafted the institution's definition of the capstone experience.

The Faculty Senate approved the recommendation that each academic program require a capstone experience for their students starting with students entering WVU in Fall 2002. The Senate

Curriculum committee will certify the capstone experience for each undergraduate academic program by May 15, 2002. This culminating experience will require students to demonstrate their ability to integrate the knowledge they have gathered throughout their undergraduate experience, gather new knowledge independently, and demonstrate their acquired skills.

Definition of the Capstone Experience

The capstone experience is defined as: an academic experience in which students demonstrate, in a significant, relevant project that has both an oral and a written component, their abilities to gather material independently, as needed; to think critically about and to integrate the theoretical and/or practical knowledge that they have acquired throughout their undergraduate careers; and to reflect on the ethical issues that are implicit in their project and/or their project's design.

The capstone experience may be cross-disciplinary as well as focused on a specific discipline. The capstone experience is not limited to, but may include: a senior thesis; a music recital; an art exhibit; a service-learning experience; an undergraduate research project; a study-abroad experience; and a teaching internship experience.

4. Assess Curricular Reform Efforts Adopted as a Result of Commission Recommendations

Several types of assessment strategies were suggested by the Commission and have been implemented by the appropriate groups.

Audit Liberal Studies Program

The Commission recommended that there be a comprehensive review of the Liberal Studies Program (LSP) to assess its success in supporting the inquiry-based goals of the Commission, in meeting the Undergraduate Education Mission Statement, and achieving the goals set out in the LSP preamble in the Undergraduate Catalog. The assessment of the LSP is ongoing. The Faculty Senate LSP Committee plans to review over a five-year period all courses currently approved for the LSP. The second year of the review has just ended and over 150 courses have been revalidated as meeting the goals of the LSP. Courses are evaluated for their ability to provoke critical thinking (see earlier discussion), provide adequate breadth of knowledge, provide knowledge that is interrelated, and meet the other goals of the Liberal Studies Program. This audit will ensure that WVU's students continue to receive a balanced and comprehensive liberal arts and sciences education infused with critical thinking as part of their program of study.

Assessment of Academic Advising

The Commission report brought attention to the critical contribution good academic advising makes to the success of WVU undergraduate students. To provide a framework in which to consider the current status of academic advising and to take steps to improve it, a task force of faculty advisors, advising professionals, and academic administrators developed a set of guiding principles for advising.

Guiding Principles for Academic Advising

Academic advising is essential to an undergraduate student's success at WVU. Academic advising is a developmental process that assists students in the identification of their career goals and the development of an educational plan to achieve these goals.

Students are viewed holistically in the advising process. Advising occurs in the Undergraduate Academic Services Center, which focuses on first- and second-year students not advised elsewhere, and in the academic units by professional staff and/or faculty.

To maximize the success of advising, and thus our students, West Virginia University adopts the following guiding principles for academic advising:

1. Academic advising information is provided in an accurate, current, consistent and timely manner. Advisors are aware of the different resources available to students and are prepared to refer students to them.

2. Because the advisor-advisee relationship is an important one, the number of advisors any given student will have while at WVU is minimized. Good academic advising occurs in a comfortable, friendly, confidential, private and mutually respectful environment to nurture that relationship.

3. Students and parents see advisors as student-centered, approachable, responsive, responsible, and knowledgeable. Good advisors are knowledgeable about and sensitive to different populations of students and their needs.

4. The University values academic advising and recognizes the important contributions of both pro-fessional and faculty advisors and support staff

5. Advisors are aware of current practices in the field of advising and the technology used to maximize successful advising.

These guiding principles will promote a common understanding of good academic advising and its critical contribution to the academic success of WVU's students. These principles have been promulgated to all WVU colleges and schools. A strategic plan to implement these principles will be developed by the Director of the Undergraduate Academic Service Center in consultation with faculty, staff and administrators during the 2001-2002 academic year.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Commission report spoke to the need for periodic review of all undergraduate courses/curricula to assess whether they are still achieving the originally intended goals and objectives. This review is being coordinated through the WVU Assessment Council. The Assessment Council annually asks each undergraduate academic program to define two student learning outcomes, the assessment measures they will use, and the criteria for success. Academic programs are also to report results from the previous year's assessment and how those results were used to make programmatic changes. The Assessment Council provides feedback to the departments to improve their plans so that the purpose of student learning outcome assessment, continuous quality improvement of WVU's undergraduate academic programs, can be achieved. Each

program will add two more learning outcomes over the next six-year period.

The assessment of student learning outcomes will enable program faculty to understand what their students have learned, not just what the faculty have taught. This information will be used to improve the academic programs so that our graduates are well prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of a global economy and society.

5. Reward Faculty Members Who Demonstrate Teaching Innovations and Effectiveness

The Commission recognized that active faculty participation in the effort to raise academic standards and expectations would require reward structures that encourage faculty members to engage in new ways of approaching students and their learning and that do not punish faculty who realistically raise and enforce academic performance standards. To this end, the Academic Deans, working with the Provost, adopted a Statement of Values in April 2000.

Faculty have the responsibility of putting in place the higher standards and expectations discussed in this report and appropriate support structures to help students meet them. The Deans' Statement of Values indicates that faculty will be supported and rewarded when they engage effectively in the kinds of activities recommended by the Commission to raise undergraduate standards and expectations.

Statement of Values

WVU is a student-centered institution that is concerned about the academic success of its students. Our leadership as academic deans is critical to the successful implementation of our institutional efforts to adopt the principles and recommendations of the WVU Commission on Academic Standards and Expectations contained in the publication Strengthening Success Through Undergraduate Expectations. We fully endorse the report. In particular, we support inquiry-based learning as a valued part of the curriculum of a research university like WVU.

We agree to promulgate efforts to support faculty who champion curricular reform individually or collectively and/or include inquiry-based learning in their courses.

We agree to support faculty in their efforts to comply with the Senate's audit of LSP courses that calls for an assessment of the critical thinking skills of students.

We agree to recognize excellence in teaching and especially teaching innovation through the annual merit process.

We agree to open the debate on better measures of advising and reward faculty performance in this area.

We agree to lead an active discussion of broader measures of faculty performance in documenting teaching excellence.

We agree to take advantage of the breadth of opportunities available in existing University promotion and tenure guidelines to reward teaching innovation and excellence.

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned from the implementation effort are summarized below.

1. Identify faculty champions. A faculty member rather than an administrator is the best person to champion a proposal within a Senate committee and later before the Faculty Senate. Regardless of the worthiness of the issue, a faculty member brings a different credibility level to a recommendation for academic change than a major university administrator. Part of this credibility is recognition of the fact that the curriculum belongs to the faculty. It is important to be mindful of this significant cultural element underlying the desire to implement academic change.

2. Engage in active debate. It is critical to engage the academic community in active conversations about issues. Through such effort, further understanding of a proposal's strengths and weaknesses can be developed. Also, misconceptions can be uncovered. The result is that a proactive effort to explain misconceptions can more readily occur.

3. Do not fear defeat. Administrators often become paralyzed by the fear that the Faculty Senate will defeat a recommendation. This attitude can be debilitating. It is important to recognize that the collective attitudes of the group are part of the democratic process. The key to defeat is to lose based on professional differences of opinion.

4. Recognize that change is difficult. This is, without a doubt, the axiom of leadership. And for those in higher education, this axiom is especially true. Interestingly, those in higher education teach about change, yet are the least susceptible to modifying their behavior. Thus bringing about change in the curriculum is difficult. Furthermore, the time it takes to drive change is often long. By the time a recommendation is adopted, it will often take several years to implement and then even longer to assess its impact. Delaying tactics including long debates within committees are a way of having change occur in an evolutionary rather than revolutionary manner.

5. Understand the diverse faculty perspectives. Faculty approach a recommendation from the perspective of their discipline. At institutions with a diversity of disciplines, these perspectives will vary greatly. Thus, you may have individuals against a recommendation for totally opposite reasons. For example, some may believe a solution is too prescriptive, while others believe the solution is not prescriptive enough. In both cases, the different individuals will vote against a recommendation. It is critical to understand the multiple backgrounds and perspectives that are brought to a recommendation. It is then important to work to remove the objections. Engaging in active conversation (number 2 above) is essential to understanding how to develop arguments that will successfully support a recommended change.

6. Work for the desired outcome. As with most outcomes, one can accept a serendipitous consequence or work to influence a desired outcome. Do not overlook the fact that opponents will work to affect a different outcome. Thus, the final choice is often decided much like a political vote and requires a politically strategic decision process. The strength of your conviction to the outcome should dictate the extent to which you will "work" the issue politically.

Model of Success: Requiring an Orientation Course

This example highlights a positive initiative to enhance the quality of the undergraduate curriculum. It is difficult to create a new course required of all students regardless of the merits of the course. There are multiple questions to resolve including faculty workload, student workload, curricular disruption, course content, and fiscal support. Yet the Faculty Senate endorsed this requirement. Why?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that we had been delivering the course on an optional basis for many years. Recently collected data showed that students who took Orientation were more successful: more returned for their second year, and they had a better grade point average. Thus there was a sound pedagogical reason for requiring all students to take Orientation. Next, those colleges that had some form of Orientation course had to be accommodated; a compromise was readily reached. Then the issue of who would teach the course had to be resolved. It was decided that faculty, administrators, and professional staff would be asked to participate on an optional basis. But a large proportion of the instruction would occur through the resident hall staff overseen by the Resident Faculty Leaders.

Several factors contributed to the successful adoption of this recommendation: identifying faculty champions, engaging in active debate, understanding the multiple perspectives of the faculty and removing objections, and providing leadership for a successful outcome.

A Failure Worth Noting: Raising Graduation GPA

One Commission recommendation that did not ultimately receive approval from the Faculty Senate was the requirement to raise the minimum GPA for graduation from 2.00 to 2.25. There was a concern on the part of the Commission that academic standards should be addressed in some way that conveyed the sense that expectations were being raised. One option was to increase the admission standards of the institution. Given WVU's mission as the land grant institution that offers all qualified West Virginians an opportunity to pursue their education, this idea was rejected. Instead, the Commission took the view that raising the exit standards made more sense. The Senate subcommittee that discussed the matter endorsed the recommendation. There was active debate to clarify the issues and a faculty champion stepped forward.

When the proposal was placed before the Faculty Senate, there was vigorous debate. While there was sympathy with the overall goal of the proposal, the principle argument against the proposal was fear that it would lead to grade inflation. The diverse perspectives of the Faculty Senate became evident. Opponents of the recommendation worked to gather votes in opposition. Ultimately the Faculty Senate did not approve the proposal and it was not implemented.

Unanticipated But Related Initiatives

During the implementation process, unanticipated but related initiatives often present themselves. It is important to remain alert to such initiatives and to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. During the process of implementing the recommendations of the

Commission, a series of concurrent initiatives in English and mathematics were occurring. As a result, the Center for Writing Excellence in the Department of English and the Institute for Mathematics Learning in the Department of Mathematics were established. The Center for Writing Excellence focuses on helping first and second year students improve their ability to write at the collegiate level. The Mathematics Learning Institute focuses its efforts on providing a learner-oriented environment supplemented by special computer-aided learning programs for University students taking mathematics courses below the level of calculus. These initiatives support the goal of strengthening the first-year academic experience at West Virginia University and will help faculty raise academic expectations for undergraduate student performance in these critical areas.

Conclusion

High quality academic programs are fundamental to branding the institution and separating it from its competitors. Raising academic standards is part of providing that high quality academic experience. Although it has taken more time than one might wish, the changes that have been brought to the first-year experience at West Virginia University will encourage student success and strengthen WVU's tradition of academic and teaching excellence.

THE IMPACT OF FACULTY RETIREMENT ON THE QUALITY OF THE ACADEMY

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The nature of the academic labor market is rapidly changing. To illustrate this point researchers have identified trends such as increases in part-time and full-time non-tenure track faculty, and their possible negative impacts on the quality of the academy. In addition, population statistics and projections warn of an approaching crisis in the form of an aging professoriate in a post Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) environment. The 1986 ADEA amendments eliminated mandatory retirement ages for tenured faculty in the United States. Given this environment, it is important to explore the impacts of faculty retirement on the quality of the academy.

Changes in the Academic Labor Market

There are several factors indicating that the academic labor market has changed considerably over the past 2-3 decades. Four primary reasons include (a) changing employment characteristics, (b) technology, (c) accountability, and (d) an aging professoriate. Each of these factors has impacts on the quality of the academy because institutional effectiveness is inextricably linked to the quality, resourcefulness, and vigor of the faculty (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1983). "In a labor-intensive enterprise like higher education, human resources are the most valuable commodity" (Blackburn & Baldwin, 1983, p.5).

Changes in employment characteristics of faculty suggest that there is a need for a better understanding of the qualifications required to perform the duties associated with the traditional tenure-track position. The need for this information is not new, but the rapid growth among non-traditional employment relationships within the institution, such as the increase in part-time faculty and full-time non-tenure track faculty (Snyder, 1999) and emerging pseudo-faculty roles (e.g., instructional technology support professionals) have contributed to the urgency of the need for this information.

It is not at all clear whether or not these changes in the academic labor market will have positive or negative consequences associated with them. In some cases, faculty unions have begun to include stipulations regarding the use or misuse of part-time faculty in bargaining agreements (Leatherman, 2000). In other cases, researchers have recognized "the traditional full-time tenure-track faculty model is no longer adequately meeting the educational needs of a complex, dynamic society" (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001, p.7). Baldwin and Chronister (2001) believe that the quality of higher education is dependent upon a vigorous academic profession, which includes faculty in non-tenure-track positions. What is the appropriate mix of employees for a department in today's academic labor market?

Technology has changed the way we do things in higher education today (Lewis, Farris, Snow, & Levin, 1999). Many institutions have seen the emergence of a new instructional technology support professional to assist in the development of distance education courses and faculty development initiatives, for example. We are only beginning to ask questions about the appropriate classification, qualifications, and placement within the overall organizational structure for these individuals.

Increases in calls for accountability are changing the way work is conducted in the academy in very significant ways. If the accountability movement does not lose momentum (and there do not appear to be any signs that it will any time soon), then the academy may need to be prepared to answer questions regarding employment practices that they have traditionally not been asked to consider. [We do have some experience with these issues, however. We should learn from it and avoid re-inventing the wheel if at all possible (See for example, Lozier & Dooris, 1989; Baldwin & Blackburn, 1983; and Smart & Montgomery, 1976)].

In addition to these factors, changes in the demographics of the population in general and the faculty population more specifically suggest there is a need for the higher education community to consider the impact that faculty retirement has on quality in the academy. The purpose of this paper is to explore conceptually potential impacts of faculty retirement on the quality of the academy.

Anticipating Increases in Faculty Retirements

Faculty retirement is both a developmental and policy issue (Ferren, 1998). The primary reason it is such a volatile issue is that ultimately what is at stake is the quality of higher education because colleges and universities have a responsibility to re-invent themselves for the next generation (Bok, 1990).

Some people predict that more and more faculty members will postpone retirement indefinitely in a post ADEA Amendments environment. Others sound alarms because of the unprecedented numbers of faculty members who are approaching traditional retirement ages. Now much more than one-third (44%) of all full-time tenured instructional faculty and staff are 55 years of age or older (National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99, Data Analysis System). These latter researchers point to evidence which suggests that only small numbers of faculty members choose to postpone retirement for more than a few years, mainly because of financial reasons (Gustman & Steinmeir, 1991; Lewis, 1996; Monahan & Greene, 1987).

Yet another wrinkle to consider is the number of faculty members who are retiring from one institution, but are accepting employment elsewhere. About ten percent of faculty in the United States reported that they have already retired from another position (National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 99, Data Analysis System). Although these individuals may have retired from a job outside of academe (e.g., from private industry or the military), this potentially growing pool of academic talent also includes faculty members who have previously retired from positions within higher education.

The decision to retire is a personal one, affected by a complex set of financial and non-financial factors. Researchers have determined what some of the most

important of these considerations are for individuals in various circumstances. Finances appear to play an important role in the decision. Lower salaried faculty may be more likely to retire. Lower levels of identification and commitment to an organization may lead to a higher probability of retiring. Those most productive in pedagogy and service tend to select early retirement, while those most productive in research do not (Monahan & Greene, 1987). Money as a factor in the retirement decision matters to nearly everyone, but the effects of less tangible elements of professional satisfaction matter also (Lozier & Dooris, 1991). Among the non-financial factors are institutional characteristics, personal characteristics, job histories and current responsibilities, and fringe benefits (Holden & Hansen, 2001). Administrators and faculty should place an equal emphasis on the intangible aspects of retirement when designing retirement incentives (Keefe, 2001). Monetary factors being equal, nonmonetary factors help explain why some people retire sooner than others (Costa, 1998).

The Impact of Faculty Retirement on Quality in the Academy

What does this mean for the overall quality of an institution and its ability to meet the needs of its students? Therein lies one of the policy debates regarding faculty retirement issues. Policy has many meanings, but generally refers to a principal or plan pursued by government, an organization, or an individual and involves a specific course of action that attempts to address an issue of concern. Policy debates are fraught with complexity, but it is sometimes useful to oversimplify them by placing two primary competing interests at odds on a continuum. In the case of faculty retirement, two competing interests could be an institution's business interest in re-inventing itself with a desire to clear out "dead wood" unproductive faculty members contrasted with human resources developmental interests that would focus on the "gold mine" of talent and experience or the vitality of senior faculty members that Bland and Bergquist (1997) dub as having "snow on the roof, but fire in the furnace." The policy debate centers on quality and whether or not you believe that large proportions of faculty retiring would be a good thing or a bad thing for higher education in general. Arguments for and against each of these competing interests can be made by viewing them through lenses created by analyzing issues related to the overall quality of an institution and its ability to meet the needs of its students. Four of these issues include (a) staffing patterns and replacement ratios, (b) the erosion of the tenure system, (c) productivity and cost, and (d) diversity.

Staffing Patterns and Replacement Ratios

The first step towards understanding the impact of faculty retirement on the quality of the academy requires an in-depth look at the staffing patterns and replacement ratios within higher education institutions and academic departments. National data can help inform this discussion. While knowledge of faculty members' attitudes and plans regarding retirement in aggregate are no substitute for effectively managing faculty resources, national data do provide valuable benchmarks for academic administrators to gauge their position relative to higher education in general. However, these data should always be analyzed within the context of the mission of the institution and the relationship between the academic department and the institution.

Eight percent (7.7%) of full-time faculty left their positions between the fall of 1997 and the fall of 1998 (Berger & Kirshstein, forthcoming). Across institution types, the rate of departures ranged from 6.1% in public 2-year institutions to 8.5% percent in public comprehensive institutions. Of the faculty who left, 29% retired and the proportion of departures due to retirements ranged across the institution types. One-half of the faculty departures in public 2-year institutions were attributed to retirement (50%), a rate higher than any other type of institution. Also, public research institutions had a higher proportion of retirements than private research institutions (21% and 12%, respectively).

There are no national data available to track replacement ratios. However, the changed labor market for faculty is evident from data describing the new generation of faculty hired since 1986 (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1996). Many new hires hold temporary or part-time appointments. Academic administrators are responsible for managing faculty resources. It is important for them to be aware of the appropriate mix of employees for a department in today's academic labor market, to strive to obtain and/or maintain this mix, and to consider replacement ratios for tenured faculty when retirements in the department occur.

Change occurs slowly in higher education. Some may see faculty retirements as providing opportunities for institutions to restructure academic programs and to shift resources away from programs with low enrollment to those with high enrollment and high demand from students. Using more part-time faculty and making faculty appointments not on the tenure track make good business sense for institutions in a state of flux, those plagued with unproductive faculty members, or those focused on increasing efficiency and lowering cost.

On the other hand, it is equally important for academic administrators to be aware of the developmental issues that this policy ignores because there may be some unintended consequences of a retirement policy skewed too far in the direction of business interests. These unintended consequences include a potential for jeopardizing the quality of the faculty of an institution overall. The vitality of senior faculty members may suffer if they begin to see an increasing number of their colleagues deciding to retire while they feel they are shouldering more and more of the responsibility of keeping the academic department going. Part-time and temporary faculty may not be as committed to the mission of the department. But, even if part-time and temporary faculty members bring high levels of commitment to their positions, there are cultural barriers they must overcome to ensure the content of their courses is fully integrated into the curriculum of the academic program.

Erosion of the Tenure System

The data describing the new generation of faculty hired since 1986 (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1996) suggest that institutions have not been filling slots with tenure-track faculty members, but have been filling vacated positions instead with part-time and full-time non-tenure track faculty members. In many cases these new hires have had considerable previous employment experience outside higher education (Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1996).

The share of faculty members who are tenured declined from 35% to 32% between the fall of 1992 and the fall of

1998 (Lee, 2001). It may be that the academy is changing from within in response to pressures from our knowledge-driven economy and rapidly changing environmental forces that alter market conditions (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Some faculty members appreciate the opportunity for an alternative academic career, not defined by the demands of the tenure system. Others feel exploited by their institutions—that their careers are at risk because of their temporary status and the absence of a long-term commitment to them by the university (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) adopted the "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," with the specific intent of promoting public understanding and support of these concepts and agreement upon procedures to assure them in colleges and universities. In spite of their intentions, there has been disagreement about the exact nature of academic freedom and tenure and some have questioned the need for their existence. Understanding the legal boundaries associated with these concepts provides a useful lens through which to view the every day significance of them.

Hendrickson (1999) points out "academic freedom is not a constitutional guarantee but rather a contractual right granted at most institutions" (p.83). Rabban (1994) distinguishes between freedom of expression and academic freedom. He explains that freedom of expression is a civic right of the individual, which protects against state action. In contrast, he explains that academic freedom is the right of faculty as employees, irrespective of constitutional rights, to protection from institutional or employer sanctions for the public good (Rabban, 1994). The Supreme Court has recognized academic freedom as it pertains to faculty as the freedom "to inquire, to study and to evaluate" (*Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 1957, p.20). Tenure has been the mechanism traditionally used in the academy to protect academic freedom. Tenured faculty members are employed by the institution under a contract without term (Hendrickson, 1999). However, tenured faculty members may be terminated for cause.

Colleges and universities have a responsibility to re-invent themselves for the next generation (Bok, 1990). Notice, however, that the charge is to re-invent rather than to preserve. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) encourages retiring faculty members to join with continuing faculty to press for the preservation of tenured positions (Flower, 1998).

At the same time, it seems, the bar for tenure is rising at major research universities and teaching institutions alike. An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* documents this phenomenon indicating that most departments are demanding more published research -- either articles or books, or both (Wilson, 2001). What should the standard be?

It appears that the policy debate regarding the need for tenure is heating up once again, fueled this time by the imminent surge in faculty retirements. Faculty retirements could lead to an erosion of the tenure system. Purposefully or not- there is at least some evidence to indicate that it is happening. The increasing use of part-time faculty members, most of who are not in tenured or tenure-track positions, is undercutting the tenure system (Lee, 2001). Colleges and universities may be limiting the number of new faculty members with tenure. There is evidence to

suggest that institutions have not been filling tenure-track positions as faculty retire or resign to take another position. This trend should be monitored carefully because it has the potential to transform academic careers, the culture of higher education institutions, and, ultimately, the teaching and learning process.

If indeed an erosion of the tenure system is occurring then the consequences associated with such a fundamental change in the employment structure of the academy assuredly has implications for quality, including issues related to effectiveness, productivity, workload, and cost. While retirement policy skewed toward the business interests of an institution may call into question the need for tenure, focusing on human resources and developmental interests of the faculty challenge academic administrators to consider more than the bottom line.

Productivity and Cost

Increases in technology and calls for accountability have put a spotlight on the relationship between productivity and cost. Stories of "absent minded professors" are common, but there is no conclusive evidence that age affects research or teaching (Bland & Berquist, 1997). Tenured faculty members do retire later when their positions consist largely of research; their teaching loads are relatively light, and when they teach their students are good (Smith, 1991). The 1986 amendments to ADEA eliminated mandatory retirement ages for faculty as of January 1, 1994—uncapping the age of retirement and leaving it up to individual faculty members to decide when they would retire from their position. The arguments Congress heard from the higher education community opposing this legislation were related to productivity and cost. A reprieve was granted which has now expired, primarily in response to two concerns from the higher education community: (a) postponed faculty retirements would prevent colleges and universities from hiring new faculty who are traditionally a source of new ideas, and (b) an aging professoriate would grow increasingly ineffective but irremovable because of tenure (Pratt, 1989). These arguments did not expressly mention productivity or cost, but related business concerns can be inferred from both.

Neither of these arguments address policy concerns from the standpoint of human resources developmental interests, however. Bland and Berquist (1997) argue that it is important for academic administrators to understand the ways in which senior faculty can maintain their vitality and avoid burnout. The authors provide a convincing argument for institutions to examine the internal and external factors that influence faculty productivity and to implement policies and procedures that contribute to the vitality of faculty members, especially those over 50, for the benefit of both individual faculty members and the institution overall.

Diversity

National data document the steady increase in the percentage of full-time female instructional faculty and staff in the U.S., increasing from 27% in the fall of 1987, to 33% in the fall of 1992, to 36% in the fall of 1998 (Kirshstein, Matheson, & Jing, 1997; Zimbler, 2001). In addition, the percentage of white full-time instructional faculty and staff has decreased over the period from 89% to 85% (Kirshstein, Matheson, & Jing, 1997; Zimbler, 2001). As noted above, aggregate data about faculty demographic characteristics provide valuable benchmarks for academic

administrators to gauge their position relative to higher education in general. However, these data should always be analyzed within the context of the mission of the institution and the relationship between the academic department and the institution. Diversity enhances quality, in part, because it encourages dialogue and expression of different viewpoints. Faculty retirements provide an opportunity to increase diversity on-campus and within academic departments. But increasing diversity structurally is not enough. It is also important to assess the climate for diversity at the institution and within academic departments in an effort to strike a balance between business interests and human resources and developmental concerns.

Conclusion

The point of this discussion was to highlight some of the potential impacts faculty retirements might have on quality in higher education. In the end, the issue, in many cases may end up being a battle between quality and cost. Policy that seeks balance is usually best and the most likely to result in the highest quality.

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APRIL IS THE CRUELEST MONTH: MAINTAINING HIGH QUALITY WHILE REPLACING RETIRING FACULTY

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A peculiar mixture of sadness and guilty hope characterizes the month of April on many college campuses. While the final details are being arranged for arrival of young faculty who will begin their careers on campus in the following academic year, receptions are being planned for those members of the faculty who will retire at the end of the current academic year.

Universities in the United States are facing the retirement of many--in some cases most--of their faculty. Replacing these faculty members is both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, valuable expertise of experienced faculty will not be available to universities and their students. And there are costs associated with searches, start-up funding, and delivery of services to a largely inexperienced faculty. On the other hand, lower starting salaries (in most, but not all instances) can help finance the change over. There is also the influx of new ideas, perhaps more suited to the educational needs of students entering our universities now. Yet these new ideas may be suspect to those faculty members who are making important decisions about the future of the university, even while they are planning to retire. The challenge is to make this shift with a maximum of benefit to faculty, to students, and to the university's programs, with a minimum of disruption, anxiety, and missteps that will have to be corrected later. This paper will present some best practices for replacing retiring faculty and also some concerns for the future.

Understanding the Hiring Environment

The first step is to realize that this shift from a stable group of mature and experienced professors to more inexperienced faculty members necessitates a change in the way the university does business. The processes of the budget, for example, should accommodate the conversion of some funds budgeted for salary to expenses related to searches and to start up costs, such as new computers, special materials and laboratory facilities. Also there are often extra salary expenses related to the retiring population. Funding levels for academic affairs cannot be allowed to decrease during this period based simply on the fact that the total amount spent on salaries has decreased. The services to faculty, usually under the heading of Faculty Development, should be reevaluated to see whether more assistance should be offered to inexperienced teachers and researchers. There should be a general understanding, so hard in academic life, that things are a bit different now and adjustments have to be made.

Because each position signals a potential qualitative change in the way a discipline is taught, drafting each position request and position description becomes a planning exercise. Departments and committees must discuss and consider the future of the discipline and interrelationship of the disciplines. There are no more important considerations than defining a new position and than deciding

on the person to fill it. The hiring process is where mission statements become practice. If the right choices are made, the future opens to wonderful possibilities; if the wrong choices are made, the unit may find itself in a downward spiral. Either way, the hire is potentially a million-dollar decision.

While the principles and practices I will be describing could be modified for most institutions, knowing something of my experience would help provide a context. My career as an administrator and as a faculty member has been at public comprehensive institutions of medium size offering a wide range of baccalaureate degrees, teacher certifications and some graduate programs. I have worked in three states, Michigan, Wisconsin and California. My current university has about 7,400 students. I have been at institutions with a faculty union and institutions whose faculty was not unionized. The process at these universities for making hiring decisions is complex and consultative. In general, when a member of the faculty retires (or resigns), the department, usually a single discipline or a combination of related disciplines, drafts a description of the replacement and makes a request of the dean of the college. The dean generally discusses the merits of each position, as described by the department, with members of an advisory group, which may be an executive committee elected from the faculty or a council of department chairs. The dean rank orders the positions in relation to the importance of each hire. Usually not all positions are recommended to the next level. Depending on the degree of autonomy of the colleges, the final decision to search for a new member of the faculty may be made by the dean, or more usually, at the vice-presidential level.

My current institution is a campus of the California State University System. One of its policies, the Faculty Early Retirement Plan, makes this process even more complex. This policy specifies that faculty members can retire, with the institution hiring them back at 50% effort and at 50% of their former salary for five years after retirement. Thus there are often not enough resources - salary funding, classes to teach or office space - to replace retiring faculty one to one at the time of retirement. This policy, which is mandated by the collective bargaining agreement, makes hiring decisions an even more critical issue.

It is hardly new to observe that quality is a slippery concept. To get a grip on quality in relation to hiring faculty requires that the concept of quality be tied firmly to the mission of the institution. Quality is first deciding what the university is going to be. This sense of mission is a combination of traditions of the institution, community needs, faculty desires, requirements of funding sources, alumni input and student demand, often expressed in enrollment trends. Thus, a quality faculty member at one university may not be a Quality faculty member at another. Ultimately, quality is in the fit between the candidate and the current and future needs of the institution as defined by its mission.

To achieve quality, the various groups and individuals involved in the hiring process must assess the current state of the department proposing a new hire. And it is a continuous process that includes periodic strategic planning initiatives, ongoing special funding proposals, program reviews, as well as position requests. What curricular holes will be plugged by a new hire? What new ideas will candidates bring? A major impediment to maintaining quality in a time of change is

that those for whom the future means retirement are often the ones making decisions about the future of the program or, just as bad, refusing to consider the future. ("What I learned in graduate school was perfect. I have just made it better in the last 30 years. And you mean, someone wants to do it differently?") Further, rigidity of mind need not be age-related, but may be found in people far too young to be considering retirement. Fortunately, there are usually enough energetic and forward-looking, mid-career and beginning professors to make headway. There are also those few great souls who, at the end of their careers, are capable to seeing the future, knowing it is different from the past and embracing that future.

Whatever the driving force, the blind request to just replace the retiring faculty member cannot be accepted by those who make the final decision. If a department seems to be stuck in the "replacement" mode, one good strategy is to approve a temporary appointment for a year. That break and the consequences of trying to hire a "replacement" give the members of the department time to come to the realization that they cannot replace the person with his or her unique qualities, and to get on with examining what they do need.

One of the hardest things to do is to let go of an outmoded concept of structure and way of thinking about the discipline. "We have always had a specialist in..., so we need a new one when the old one retires." Or "We have always had ten people in our department. We must continue at full strength." Instead, when a retirement occurs, questions must be asked: What do we need? How has the discipline changed? What will our current students be asked to do when they graduate? Are they acquiring the skills and abilities to do these things? And, often the most difficult question, Should we put the position back in the department of the retiring faculty member, or move it to another discipline that is growing? Perhaps we need to replace the person who has retired with a person with similar abilities. Perhaps we do not.

The Hiring Process

The hiring process begins with academic departments and deans of colleges, those with responsibility and practical knowledge of the field, but centralized administration should be engaged throughout the process. This includes oversight of decisions made at other levels, providing workshops on the hiring process, and standardizing such written materials as advertisements and letters of appointment. If there are many searches proposed and in progress, it is wise to consolidate and regularize the process as much as possible. I fully realize that I am now talking like a bureaucrat, but there it is. Sometimes it is just easier, and fairer, if everyone is expected to do the same thing on the same schedule. Each person in the process understands his or her role so that issues (and people) do not "slip between the cracks." For example; approvals for searches are not just handed out any time, but at a specific time. Granted, the searches themselves take on a life of their own and will end with dissimilar circumstances, at different times and with varying results.

Whatever the other vagaries of the process, one hopes to avoid the politics of the situation. Such extraneous concerns can affect the process at any level, unfortunately. Is it a well-regarded department or popular faculty sponsor or an unpopular or upstart unit? Making

selections based on politics and many other pitfalls can be avoided if university mission statements are clear, compelling and widely accepted. Arguments for going forward based on political concerns can be sometimes defused with a suggestion that the discussion return to mission statements and supporting documentation for requests that best fit with those statements.

The program review process runs parallel to the decision to replace or reassign faculty positions. Generally such reviews take place every five to seven years. This review should assist in delineating the current and future need (or lack thereof) for positions. The review should also include text and statistics documenting the successes of the discipline; its obligations to other campus programs; its function within the mission of the institution; and its place in regional and national trends. Whether it is part of the program review or the process for deciding to conduct a search for a faculty member, such issues, as a recent history of enrollments, mandated programs (e.g., teacher preparation), and the number of part-time faculty in the department are also crucial for any consideration.

The next step for the dean, the provost or vice president for academic affairs is to look at the array of proposed searches. However effective the process thus far, it is doubtless characterized by some wishful thinking. That major that was so hot a few years ago, or worse, a traditional field of long standing, is clearly not going anywhere now. And no one has had the courage to point out that embarrassing fact to valued colleagues. Credible justifications need to be made about the need of each position in the context of the whole. While there is great disappointment and impassioned rhetoric over the decision not to replace a retiring faculty member, if there is information backing up that decision, the disruption to the institution usually dies down.

It is all too often easier to just ask for a "replacement," hoping that the major is just in a temporary down turn, which that new person can turn around. However hard to make the decision, scarce funds for faculty salaries cannot be spent in making a few people feel reassured, at the expense of other programs that are pushing at the door to grow. At the other extreme is the department that uses the prospect of a new hire to chase every fad. To get around some of the problems at either extreme, members of the department in which the discipline is taught and colleagues outside the department involved in the process should be asked for answers to such questions as, what courses would the person teach, and what is the enrollment history for these and similar courses? What is the interrelationship of this course work with other disciplines? How would the person be evaluated during the tenure and promotion process? If there are assessments of student outcomes found in the program review, what weaknesses have these assessments uncovered and does the position description address these deficiencies? However important the planning process, the final selection of positions to put back into departments requires some courage at whatever senior level that decision is made.

The fit of the position in the university's mission goes beyond the nature of the specialty of the candidate, but includes other concerns as well. For example, in many disciplines new faculty should have extensive experience with computers, especially in the areas of distance education and computer-enhanced education for on-campus students. There may also be university-wide initiatives

such as MIT's commitment to putting all of its courses on line in the next ten years. Another concern is knowledge of various teaching styles. Many Ph.D. granting universities are preparing their graduate students to become university teachers, in such programs as Preparing Future Faculty that guide the students though a curriculum that will ready them to organize material for their classes, to develop standards for grading, and to practice various teaching modes, which might include lecture techniques, small group learning, and portfolio assessment. Institutions that pride themselves on undergraduate teaching should look on experience in one of these programs favorably.

A concern with issues of diversity on university campuses in California has gone beyond mere "political correctness." California now has no majority ethnic or racial group. Diversity may mean seeking a diverse faculty, or dealing with a diverse student body, or the ability to teach course work that encompasses diversity issues. For many universities, selecting such a faculty is necessary if the university is to serve an ever-growing number of students from significantly different backgrounds. A diverse faculty not only provides a variety of role models, but also prepares all students for the diverse world outside the university. Whatever the nature of the mission, these concerns and initiatives should influence the interview and selection processes.

The position announcement and advertisement must truly reflect the position searched and nature of the qualifications. If possible, the ad should give a sense of the institution and its location. At this time, the web site is as important, if not more important, as any other source of information on the position and the institution. For the current job seeker, the web site should be easy to navigate, and the information consistent and up to date. The ad and the web site should also attract the candidates who are considered the most desirable by the institution and the department within it. "The fisherman picks the fish, the fish picks the bait." Another way of saying, make it easy for the most desirable candidates to apply by making the university's mission clear and by not piling on requests for information that will not be needed to make the initial selection. More information can be requested as the pool shrinks during the process. Again, clarity of purpose in the ad is important. If faculty, students and administration are reading from the same mission statements, the process is easier.

Another and very serious factor to consider is that in the United States fewer and fewer graduate students are pursuing doctoral and other terminal degrees. This is most noticeable in fields such as engineering, but it is also true in all fields to a greater or lesser degree. Thus, as more and more professors retire, the job market has changed greatly. There are more position openings in many fields than there are applicants to fill them. Ultimately, our concern with hiring quality faculty may extend into supporting policies that favor the success of graduate students.

As the search progresses, questions should be asked of the applicant and the references that bring out information on which to judge "the fit." Is the person a scholar who wants to spend time in the library or laboratory? However wonderful the qualifications, this person may not be a fit for a small rural liberal arts institution with 1,500 undergraduates. This matter of fit is all-important. This means that for the institution and for the candidate, quality is not a matter of the intrinsic worth of the

candidate or of the institution. As dean, I once interviewed a candidate for a position in one of the social sciences. She told me about her rigorous research agenda. My institution was devoted to teaching. By the end of the interview it was clear to both of us that we were not a fit. She pulled out of the search. She was an appealing candidate, but from my point of view, the interview was a success.

One might say that it would have been even better if my university had not wasted its money and its faculty time on this candidate and she had not wasted her time on us. The ad and the questions leading up to the on-campus interview should have been tighter and clearer, but there is always some good in such an experience, because both the candidate and the institution can sharpen and refine their focus on the matter of fit for future searches. When plans are made and mission statements examined, it is not always clear what the fit might be. When the person is right before you, both you and the candidate must think through how he or she will fit into the rhythms and needs of the department. At this point, the issue of the fit becomes clear and the possibility of a failed search has to be acceptable to both the candidate and to the search committee.

We all must realize that applying for a job is a skill, like riding a bicycle. Some candidates apply well. Others, equally qualified and appropriate to the institution, do not present themselves at all well in telephone or on-campus interviews. This is why exploring issues with the references is of extreme importance. For a position that will be based on good teaching, ask advisors and others how the person performed as a teaching assistant. Did he or she participate in a Preparing Future Faculty program? If so, how did the candidate do? For a faith-based institution, questions about the candidate's ability to support the religious mission of the institution are of crucial importance. For those institutions that require a researcher who will advance the reputation of the university, ask the advisor, the post-doc researcher and colleagues about the candidate's ability to work independently and the likelihood of his or her obtaining grant support. Pursue the information with follow-up, open-ended questions, and more than one respondent, at least one of whom is not on the reference list. The questions should be based, as in other aspects of the search, on finding out how this candidate will fit into the mission of the institution.

The trend for on-campus interviews is to run the candidates from group to group and to stack up the appointments with all sorts of interested parties. Frankly, this process is unsatisfactory in many ways, but I do not know a better one. The person usually does see and get a feel for the campus, its faculty, administration and students. Whatever else happens, the candidates should have experience with activities that pertain to the basic function of the position. If the campus is student-centered and tenure and promotion are based on teaching ability, the candidate should meet with students and give a class. If the candidate is going to spend most of his or her time in the laboratory with senior researchers and graduate students, that group should have ample opportunity to see the candidate in that environment.

Too often, it seems that we are looking so hard for the match that we do not see what we do not want to see. It is a bad sign when the interviewer does most of the talking. Questions are often asked to confirm opinions, rather than to receive information on which to make a decision. Occasionally, even worse, candidates become pawns in department politics, one

faction fighting for one candidate, another faction backing the other. In the end the successful candidate may face a rocky road to tenure. While this cannot be completely eliminated, one way to head it off is to write the position description in such a way as to define the position up front. The fight is over the description rather than over the candidate. But there are no guarantees. Too particular an ad may also lead in an unfortunate direction. Those who review advertisements before they go out, often develop a sixth sense as to ads that will bring trouble and those that will work. If possible, cultivate that talent somewhere on campus. If the specter of a departmental battle raises its head (and most departments with serious interpersonal problems are notorious), it may be best not to enter into a search at all, at least not for an inexperienced person for an untenured position.

Final Phases of the Hiring Process

The final steps to hiring a faculty of quality are taken during the hiring process itself - the jousting on salary issues, start-up costs, release time for research and the inevitable paperwork. The importance of this moment cannot be lost. For both parties it is important "to get it in writing." No matter how enthusiastic committee members are about a candidate, they should not lead the candidate to believe that resources are going to become available when those commitments cannot be honored. Whatever else happens, the relationship should be based on honesty, even when it includes unflattering information about the university. There has to be a limit to the wooing. All of us in this litigious age have had to clean up messes created when the hire was made based on promises that the faculty member believed were not kept. The resulting disillusionment is costly on all levels, and eats away at quality as administrators and faculty colleagues are called in to deal with an unhappy and unresponsive faculty member, rather than to attend to productive initiatives.

Mentoring after the new professor has come to campus is also an important component in the progress to achieving a quality faculty. Mentoring should be both formal and informal. Messages concerning the mission of the institution should be reinforced. Early on, the new faculty member should be told what is expected for the tenure and promotion file. Some knowledgeable person should be able to answer questions on such issues as grading policy, taking attendance in class, and field trips, but also health insurance and parking. And, in general, who is who and what is what? Orientation programs can be useful, but mentoring and other forms of assistance should be available throughout the formative months at the university.

As the new professor embarks on the review process for tenure and promotion, the message he or she receives from the department, dean, faculty committees, and central administration should be as consistent as possible. For example, in many teaching institutions all faculty must attain a high level of proficiency in teaching for tenure and promotion, but expectations for publishing and service vary from department to department. It is no easy matter to maintain this delicate and imperfect balance between a single standard and the autonomy of each department or discipline.

Because hiring someone is such a great commitment, the university should attempt to fund faculty development activities appropriate to the mission, whether it be teaching and learning strategies or grant writing suggestions.

Ironically, the result of all this may be letting go of some of the good people we have hired. There will be those who start out with high hopes, but make the decision to leave. The departmental colleagues may be too aggressive or not aggressive enough. The ratios between teaching and research may be wrong. The town may be too big or too small.

Whatever the reason, faculty colleagues and administrators should see the situation for what it is. There may be some aspect of university life that could be improved upon. Perhaps better mentoring. But more likely, it is just a lack of fit, rather than as something to be fixed. This attrition too is a part of maintaining a quality faculty.

In the end, a quality faculty member is one who furthers the aims of the university as he or she matures.

LIVING NEAR THE EDGE: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF STRAGTEGIC DECISION-MAKING REGARDING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Much has been written about the challenges posed by information technology in higher education; indeed, entire organizations such as Educause are devoted to the issue (for more information, see www.educause.org). Despite the many articles, books, and presentations discussing how higher education administrators should respond, few actually discuss the details about either how academic affairs divisions and information systems divisions should interact or how to make strategic decisions about the most effective combinations of academic programs and technological tools.

This paper provides an overview of the lessons learned from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's efforts to create and implement what we term the blended mode university, a seamless and transparent partnership wedding academic affairs and information technology systems to create, manage, and support both traditional and online learning opportunities. It is a story of change, from an approach (very common in higher education in the United States) in which functions are viewed as separate, and course development is considered both one course at a time (that is, with not forethought about programmatic aspects or agendas) and in isolation to other activities of the university. It is also a story of how, very much like the faculties of medieval European universities following Gutenberg's invention of the movable type printing press, we are coming to grips with the true implications of putting source material in learner's hands (or, perhaps more precisely, their fingertips poised on mice).

The first section of the paper provides a brief overview of the rationale for creating the blended mode university. The institutional context is discussed, and the structural changes in organization and administration are presented. The second section provides a discussion for how strategic decisions about online learning options are made, and the interdivisional and inter-institutional processes that have been created and implemented to create the blended mode university. The third section describes outcomes to date. The final section presents some directions for the future.

Strategic Organizational Change

In meeting the challenges that information technology poses for higher education, university leaders come under tremendous pressure for their university be at the cutting edge of technology and change. As appealing as it is to be on the frontier, such a reaction is really feasible for only a handful of institutions worldwide. The reasons are quite simple: it is both extremely expensive and highly

risky for a university to be an "early adopter" of technology on a continual basis. Only a few universities have the resource base to afford technologies when first unveiled, and the resources to recover from mistakes when the marketplace heads in a direction different from the one implemented.

For reasons that will be made clear in the remainder of this paper, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) decided to follow a different approach. Rather than being at the leading edge, we chose instead to be near it. This approach has many advantages

- Lessons can be learned from other, leading edge universities, resulting in fewer wrong decisions.
- The opportunity is there to build consensus on campus for change.
- More return on capital investment can be realized through smarter decisions of how to spend limited resources, because technologies are allowed to begin sorting themselves out before adoption.
- Better, more strategic decisions can be made about how best to marry technology and academics.

These advantages were not always apparent at UNCW, but had emerged over the course of time. Among the most important realizations was the need to create a separate structural division for information technology that had the good of the entire university as its goal. Three steps were critical to our success.

Step 1: Create a New Division to Coordinate Technology

When campus computing emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, UNCW decided to place it organizationally within Academic Affairs. At the time, this structure made some sense, given that much of computing was in support of the academic program. However, this structure allowed computing (and later, information technology) to be downplayed in importance as a priority. Consequently, by the late 1990s, computing at UNCW was woefully under funded and on the verge of technological obsolescence. Moreover, other divisions (most notably, Business Affairs) had to develop independently, resulting in no overall plan for information technology at the university level. Thus, in 1999 the Information Systems Technology Division (ITSD) was created to achieve several goals:

Function realignment. All support for hardware and software now resided in one division, which created the opportunity to leverage purchases, support, and partnerships.

Position realignment. Support staff for information technology now reported through a common organizational structure.

Budget realignment. Budgets for purchases of hardware and software, creation and support of networks and related infrastructure, and support mechanisms were now centralized. This created significant economies of scale.

New protocols and processes. The new division had the authority to create computing standards, baseline

equipment guidelines, and structured processes for implementing innovation.

Step 2: Create a New Way of Interacting

Once ITSD was created, UNCW had a way to manage its technology infrastructure more effectively and efficiently. However, this new organizational structure did not address historical and typical tensions between information technology professionals and the faculty in academic affairs. Addressing this issue required a radical rethinking of the relationships between these two areas.

In consultation with Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Systems Dr. Robert Tyndall, I led a transformative effort to create a new model of cooperation. Through a unique approach of functional alignments, position alignments and budgetary alignments, Academic Affairs and ITSD created joint innovations, structures and protocols. This close collaborative relationship involves making transparent several critical areas: budgeting, strategic planning, equipment purchasing, and support systems and personnel.

What does this transparent model mean? From most people's perspectives, it has now become very difficult to know which division supported a particular effort. For example, there is now joint (transparent) support for a wide range of university offices and functions, including academic programs, student services, career counseling, research options, online resources/library, public service, financial services, innovation and partnerships, alumni services, development, and extra-curricular programs.

The transparency of the system is a major advantage, especially when it comes to funding technology initiatives. Because of the level of cooperation, it is now possible for ITSD, Academic Affairs, or both to provide support (monetary or otherwise). Academic Affairs and ITSD now sponsor all major technology initiatives involving the teaching-learning enterprise jointly. Policies and procedures are jointly developed and promoted. This change in culture has resulted in a new level of trust among faculty and staff, which means that there is common understanding across divisions of challenges and opportunities.

Very few universities have such a close working relationship between academic affairs and information technology systems divisions. For the relationship at UNCW to develop, several key steps were taken. First, support positions in the Center for Teaching Excellence were jointly funded. Second, the development of online courses because a fully integrated process intimately involving both divisions. Third, I meet regularly with key information technology staff, and Vice Chancellor Tyndall meets regularly with the Deans' Council to keep communications lines open and strong.

All of these steps were essential to create the *blended mode university*. By this term we mean not only the seamless, integrated, and transparent model of cooperation, but also the creation of a delivery system equally capable of delivering both traditional and virtual versions of programs and services.

At first blush, providing services in a blended mode may seem inefficient or duplicative. On the contrary, providing seamless integration of both high-touch and high-tech has opened new and exciting ways of improving services. For example, providing students the ability to complete inventories concerning career interests online allow a more effective use of time spent in-person with a career counselor. The result is more effective and efficient use of personnel and technology through an analysis of process and function.

Step 3: Make Strategic Decisions About Online and On-Campus Programs

Arguably the most difficult aspect of implementing the blended mode university comes when decisions need to be made about what online courses and on-campus programs should be developed or changed. I will consider each in turn.

Online Programs. At many universities, online courses are developed through a process used previously at UNCW. A request for proposals is circulated, individual faculty respond, and a committee makes recommendations about which courses should be supported. The problem with this approach is that decisions about which online courses to create are made in isolation to broader university goals. Although each individual course may be quite good, what is lacking is a coherent strategy focused on creating coherent academic programs. The result of this approach is a set of online courses, often quite extensive, but a set that too often does not represent a degree program or core curriculum.

Once the lack of cohesion in the online course offerings was realized, UNCW made a key change in approach. Beginning in 2000, the decisions about which online courses to develop were based on strategic planning completed by the Deans' Council. Our online, or e-learning, strategy was designed to address several key issues:

- *Whether the online course (or e-learning in general) is to be complementary or revolutionary.* A key, but often overlooked consideration is whether the online course is essentially identical in content and feel to the traditional course, or whether it is a radically different experience. The more different the look and feel, the more different the kinds of support that will be needed.

- *E-learning and online course goals drive structures, processes, and outcomes.* For the development of online courses to be maximally successful, the process must inform other key decisions concerning the support services that are necessary. Most important, currently existing services that were designed based on traditional courses are not likely to be easily adapted to support fully online learning.

- *Comprehensive planning is essential.* The broader view of the academic curriculum must be taken in determining the appropriate approach for online course development. This

consideration proved to be key at UNCW.

Deciding not to develop online courses in isolation is a straightforward process. Deciding the proper alternative strategy is not as easy. In UNCW's case, there were two main constraints. First, four-year institutions in the University of North Carolina system are not allowed to create online courses at the introductory level (termed basic studies or general education). This area is the purview of the community college system. Second, development of online programs must be done with the approval of the system office. This ensures a certain level of cooperation and leveraging of resources among the constituent universities.

It is at this point that many universities make a critical mistake in their eagerness to get into the online business—they fail to analyze the market carefully. Market analyses must take several things into account: demand for the program, sustainability of demand, match between demand for a program and campus expertise, and level of community infrastructure. This latter point is important. If the to-be-designed online course will include graphics or streaming video that require availability of high-speed internet connections, it is important to ascertain whether such connections exist in the target service areas at an affordable price.

In UNCW's case, market studies revealed that there was insufficient demand for online programs in several areas, but did indicate a need in selected areas, particularly nursing, teacher education, business, criminal justice, and public administration. The first two were chosen for current development due to their critical need across both North Carolina and the United States. Thus, the request for proposals regarding online courses was restricted to courses in these two target areas.

Once the target courses were chosen, the blended mode university model allowed us to create a unique cooperative process for online course development. Depicted in Figure 1, this process is based on different offices and divisions taking the lead at various steps in online course development. This model and process resulted from numerous discussions with faculty and information technology staff, and provides the highly integrated approach we sought. As can be seen from the model, no one group or unit assumes the leadership for online course development throughout the process. The distinct advantage in this approach is that the unit or group that has the primary responsibility at any given point is the unit or group with the most expertise for that aspect of development. Such a model absolutely requires a very high level of trust and cooperation at the level created through the blended mode university model. Few universities have been able to create this interdivisional support structure. Over time, the process has created a cadre of faculty who have themselves participated in the online development process who can now serve as mentors for other faculty, which in turn lower the overall costs of online course development due to the need for fewer external consultants.

On-Campus Programs. As with online courses, we have taken a different approach with the implementation of

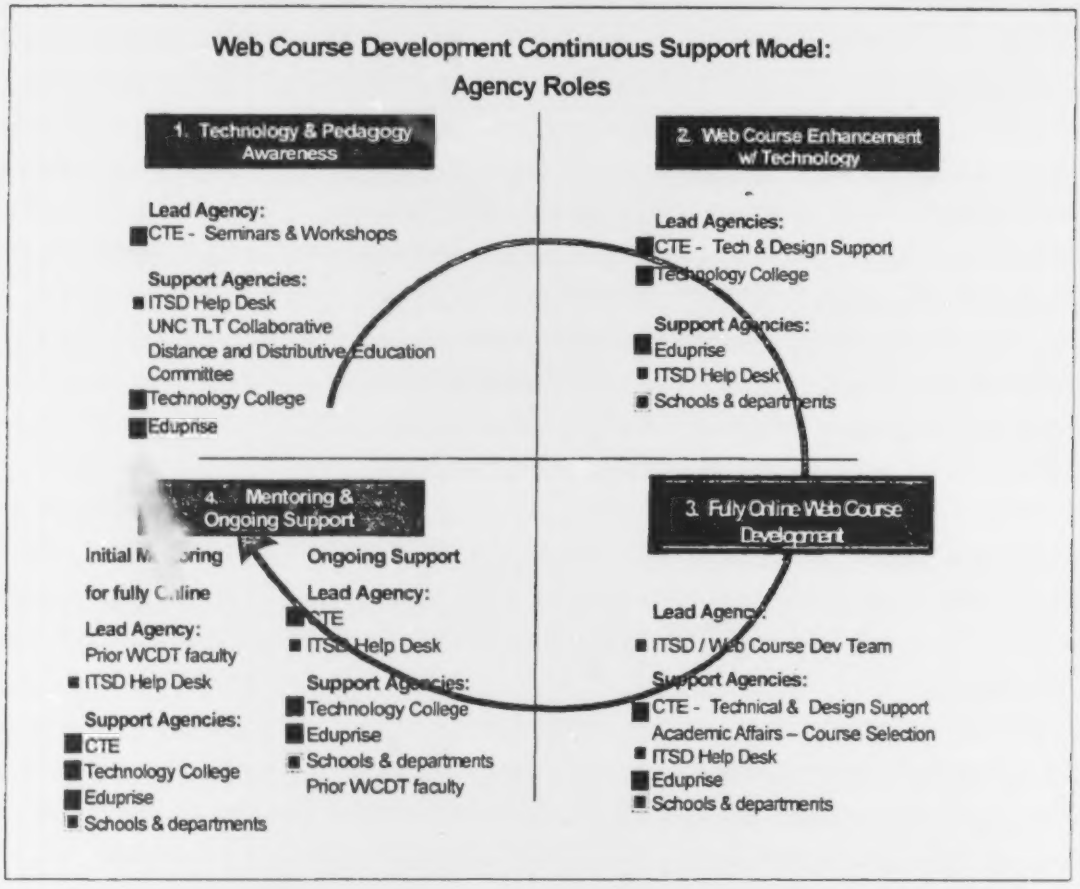

Figure 1. Model of online course development process at UNCW. (CTE=Center for Teaching Excellence; Eduprise is the UNCW partner for course hosting and support; Technology College is subunit of UNCW focusing on online courses; WCDT=Web Course Development Team)

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technology in on-campus programs. In general, we have used a model in which faculty are strongly encouraged to experiment, with Academic Affairs and Information Technology Systems providing both sees and some ongoing funding.

One excellent example of this approach is Project Numina, which involves the Departments of Chemistry, Computer Sciences, and Mathematics and Statistics. Because detailed information about the project is available on the Web (aa.uncwil.edu/numina/), only a brief summary will be presented here. Students in introductory chemistry, computer science, and calculus are provided HP Jornada handheld computers. The handhelds provide textbook material, access to software used in the course, and a real-time student response system used during problem solving, quizzes, and examinations. The immediate feedback feature of the student response system means that instructors know exactly how many students understand a concept, and where students are having difficulty. Thus, instructors can intervene immediately and help students master difficult issues.

Research conducted by the departments clearly indicates that students learn better using the interactive capabilities of the technology-mediated instruction. This is important, as one critical issue in implementing such policies as mandatory laptops is whether the computers actually make a difference or add value to students' educational experience. Our data show that they do.

Outcomes of the Blended Mode University

Creating a new and innovative approach to academics and technology is one thing; demonstrating its value is quite something else. To date, we have focused on several questions: Who benefits from this approach? How do they perceive this approach? How cost effective is the approach? Because UNCW uses a total quality management approach, we conduct thorough assessments of all aspects of the university each year. These assessments focus on people, departments, and functions, and are conducted via surveys completed on the Web. Copies of our surveys are available upon request.

Who Benefits and How Do They Perceive the Blended Mode University?

Creating a blended mode university benefits students, faculty, and staff. Students are able to transact most routine business electronically or by drop-in, making it maximally convenient. Most students choose the electronic option for everyday transactions, and reserve the in-person option for more complex problems. For example, paying bills electronically by credit card and having an appointment with a financial aid counselor is a common strategy. Providing the options for students makes it much easier for them to fit these tasks into their life styles. In the case of Project Numina, students also learn more and learn better through technology-mediated instruction.

For faculty, the combined options also make transactions more convenient. For example, by submitting grades electronically, faculty have the convenience of being able to work anywhere, grades are available immediately to students, and errors are reduced. Services aimed specially at faculty that are provided flexibly also permit faculty to transact business at their convenience. The ability to intervene specifically where students are having

difficulty makes faculty more effective teachers. For staff, the blended mode university has created an environment that provides more challenging (and less tedious) work, with all the flexible benefits accruing to faculty.

User surveys of the quality of service provided by the blended mode model over the past two years have consistently shown high levels of satisfaction. Very few comments about a loss of personal contact have been noted. These high levels of satisfaction are in marked contrast to high levels of complaints about services in the years preceding the implementation of the blended mode approach. In view of the rollout of a wireless network on our campus, it is likely that satisfaction levels will continue to increase as the convenience of transactions increases (e.g., one will be able to conduct business from literally anywhere on campus with a wireless computing device).

How Cost Effective is the Blended Mode Model?

The degree to which implementing the blended mode model has resulted in cost savings is difficult to assess for two major reasons. First, electronic commerce emerged only recently as a viable alternative, roughly about the time that the ITSD was created. Thus, it is impossible to disaggregate costs and the synergy of a new division. Second, student expectations regarding the availability and convenience of transactions continue to increase each year. Thus, it is impossible to disaggregate the additional costs of adding services from these rising expectations. However, it is possible to estimate what it may have cost to provide the range of services available today using the old, people-based approach.

As a case study, consider the Registrar's Office. At UNCW, the Registrar handles many functions including course registration, grade reporting, and transcripts. By implementing the blended mode model, we have been able to maintain the same staffing level in this office with a student population of roughly 10,000 as we had with a student population of roughly 6,000. Similar patterns are evident in other areas.

Even after taking into account the up-front costs associated with the technology, UNCW has saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in recruitment, training, and compensation costs. When one considers that much of the technology costs can be leveraged, the savings are amplified the more the blended mode model is implemented.

Lessons Learned and Future Directions

The strategic organizational changes made at UNCW did not come flawlessly. Among the many important lessons learned were these. First, it is impossible to communicate with key constituents too much. Each step, no matter how seemingly insignificant, must be explained to all affected individuals. The time invested in this process will mean much less resistance and questioning later. Second, public actions must be taken to show how the new collaborative model works, and why the collaborative model is better than the old way of doing business. Such actions need to be taken early in the process and widely publicized. Third, a continual review process must be instituted to respond quickly to problems that inevitably occur. Quick adjustments to the new model will show the responsiveness of senior administrators and will sustain morale.

The blended mode university model will enable UNCW to be very flexible in future online program development as well as respond nimbly to changing technologies. On the program front, the growing need for master's degree professional programs means that we will be examining opportunities in these areas. Being able to respond to changing technologies is key. For example, because of the level of cooperation at UNCW, decisions concerning the implementation of wireless networks were made very quickly and incorporated into the design of new classroom buildings very easily.

The creation of baseline standards for computing and for classroom technology were accomplished quickly because all relevant committees include representatives from Academic Affairs and ITSD, and are all co-chaired by individuals from both divisions.

In sum, UNCW has developed a highly effective model for dealing with the challenges posed by technology. Its blended mode university has enabled a close working partnership to be formed between Academic Affairs and Information Systems Technology that is rare in higher education. The model has enabled UNCW to move from being somewhat behind the technological curve to being near the leading edge. This new position enables UNCW to stay in contact with the leading innovators of change and to respond quickly and strategically to emerging realities.

POLITICAL REALITIES FOR LEADERS WITH A QUALITY AGENDA FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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When Peters and Waterman (1982) published their seminal text on excellence in organizations, the business community began to focus on developing a quality agenda, in order to better compete with their Japanese counterparts. When the *National Baldrige Award for Excellence* came into being in 1989, again, the business community examined itself and rallied as individual corporations to pursue this prestigious recognition for their quality improvement effort.

Since 1998, this national Baldrige award has included educational institutions through a slightly altered set of values, and has caught higher education completely by surprise. Many institutions reject the whole business premise of thinking of their students and stakeholders as consumers, customers or clients, but there is no denying that a Baldrige assessment "provides baseline measures and a standard of comparison using an accepted assessment framework." (Ruben, 2000, p. 6) Gathering data on all facets of university life and monitoring the changes over time can effectively apply to educational institutions, but even after a decade of dialogue on assessment of learning outcomes, there are relatively few capable and committed campus leaders to document institutional efforts that will "encourage and appropriately reward higher levels of productivity." (Ruben, p. 6) Should continuous quality improvement become a part of strategic planning for institutions of higher learning? If it does not, it will most likely not become a reality.

The seven core competencies of the *National Baldrige Education Award* (Leadership, Strategic Planning, Student and Stakeholder Focus, Information and Analysis, Faculty and Staff Focus, Educational and Support Process Management, and School Performance Results) provide a non-prescriptive system for assessing an institution's performance. Legislators and the public at large want accountability for their investment in education, and taking this Baldrige self-assessment process seriously provides the kind of documentation to put critics at ease. Merely undertaking the review process is sufficient reward and time well-spent for any institution, but receiving the coveted Baldrige national award or state sponsored award based on the Baldrige criteria would be a significant student recruitment tool and public relations bonanza for stakeholders in and outside of the university.

For any institution desiring to take this continuous quality improvement journey, however, there are some political realities that leaders should be apprized of before engaging in such an adventure. The intent of this article in the conference monograph is to provide caution and advice for would be sojourners as they take on this daunting task, amidst all their other responsibilities.

Creating a Receptive Environment for Qualitative Improvement

Although institutions of higher education have as their primary focus teaching and learning, they can seldom be confused with true learning organizations. Peter Senge (1994) identifies learning organizations as those where:

- people feel they're doing something that matters,
- every individual in the organization is somehow stretching, growing, or enhancing his [her] capacity to create,
- people are more intelligent together than they are apart,
- the organization continually becomes more aware of its underlying knowledge base,
- visions of the direction of the enterprise emerge from all levels,
- employees are invited to learn what is going on at every level of the organization,
- people feel free to inquire about each others' assumptions and biases,
- people treat each other as colleagues, and
- people feel free to try experiments, take risks, and openly assess the results. (p. 51)

That is not to say that some of these criteria are not found on the university campus, but clearly, there are many factors that work against such a lofty goal as that of becoming a true learning organization as defined by Senge.

One political reality that leaders must be prepared to confront resides in the faculty and staff attitude that *this too shall pass,* if they hold out long enough. Most faculty view concepts that originate in the business world such as downsizing, rightsizing, total quality management (TQM), continuous quality improvement (CQI), excellence, empowerment and others, as the latest administrative fad to rally coworkers to be better than they are currently. Qualitative improvement should be a disease that every person on a college campus desires to catch, but such is not usually the case. Faculty, however, seriously believe that the quality of students needs to improve, not faculty and staff or the learning environment on the campus. If *this too shall pass*, why waste valuable energy and exert effort to making qualitative changes in courses, teaching pedagogies, or gathering assessment data? Consequently, "any organizational learning change process must start by creating conditions whereby these processes are set in motion." (Frydman, et.al., 2000, p. 99) Leaders should thoughtfully justify why the university community ought to seriously consider the advantages of continuously improving every course, service, or program for which it is responsible. This is higher education's reasonable service to society, but it requires courageous, substantiative, and lengthy leadership for improvement to become a reality.

Alexander and Serfass (1999, p.2) identify two primary categories of educational leaders: (a) those who are driven by tradition through executive decision making and top-down authority; and (b) those who monitor student and stakeholder needs and respond to them to maintain constancy of purpose. Leaders in the first category are becoming increasingly ineffective, while leaders in the second category must be risk takers and become *trailblazers* within their own institution to make meaningful progress.

Communication throughout the campus, up and down the hierarchy and across all segments of the institution, becomes a significant challenge in any quality improvement movement. To achieve this illusive ideal of two-way communication, opportunities for communicating about any topic must be planned, highly desired, and the findings gained through interaction should be accepted by the leadership, no matter what learning takes place as an outgrowth of what is said and heard. Another political reality of embarking on a quality agenda is that *when one begins to talk about improving quality, people become defensive about what they do*, who is monitoring what is done, and for what purpose the information gained will be used. Paranoia sets in among administrators, support staff and faculty, and people often become worried about their positions, tenured or not. When that happens the focus becomes maintaining the status quo and not what can be done to improve the teaching and learning climate on campus. Consequently, no institution should take the continuous quality path unless trust, competence and credibility exist on the campus among the leaders and their coworkers. Like communication, credibility must be earned by both leaders and followers; and "follow-through is essential to developing trust" for either group of people. (Nanus & Dobbs, 1999, p. 55)

Communication is a process and not merely a single act, and becomes a primary responsibility for the chief executive officer (CEO).

> One will communicate more effectively with others if one is clear about what one intends to communicate. By knowing his [her] purpose, a leader or follower can better decide whether to communicate publicly or privately, orally or in writing, and so on. These decisions may seem trivial, but often the specific content of a message will be enhanced or diminished by how and where it is communicated. (Hughes, et.al., 1999, p. 494)

High quality communication throughout all facets of the organization becomes critical if the leadership truly desires participative processes on the campus that may result in qualitative improvement.

In addition to effective communication, significant contributors to developing a climate that embraces qualitative improvement are incorporating Academic Program Review (APR) of every academic department or student service and instituting institutional effectiveness (IE) initiatives on campus. These efforts toward effective communication, APR, and IE can provide the impetus for qualitative improvement, but impetus and acceptance are two different things. Faculty must be centrally involved in designing the APR process and be willing to defend its institutional advantages when

some faculty take the process to task. And count on it, some faculty will resist any attempt to objectively review and analyze what they do, why they do it, and its value to the teaching-learning process.

As a part of the APR, it could be beneficial for academic departments to select an outstanding department from another institution and use them as a benchmark for accomplishment. The administration needs to provide budgetary support that will allow each department to bring a faculty member or department chair from the selected benchmark department to the campus to assist them during their own APR. Even the term benchmark has a negative connotation for some faculty and staff, because it implies some external standard to which one should aspire. Alstete (1995) reminds us that "benchmarking is a positive process and provides objective measurement for base lining (setting the initial values), goal-setting, and improvement tracking" (p. v). Base line data must be established to enable longitudinal documentation of progress to occur over time.

Like communication, creating a sense of urgency within the campus culture for continuously improving its quality becomes the responsibility of the CEO. Leaders should never underestimate the complacency or willingness to continue the status quo in the university culture, particularly in good times (Kotter, 1996). Organizational culture is defined by Nanus and Dobbs (1999) as "the shared beliefs, values, and basic assumptions that define 'how we do business here'...and the organizational culture contributes to the fulfillment of the mission and vision." (p. 154) Merely appealing to the community to pursue excellence in what they do will fall short of expectations for improvement to become an effective and more successful organization. Substantiative and active leadership must be exerted. The National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) cites six traits of successful quality organizations:

1. They are committed to continual improvement.

2. Everyone in the organization, from lowest employee in the organization to top management, is dedicated to producing quality products or services.

3. Everyone is service-oriented and understands who their customers are.

4. The management and workers collectively make decisions based on well-researched data.

5. Everyone understands that there are variations in every process.

6. Quality is seen as a journey, not a destination, and because improvements are made, opportunities develop for new quality initiatives. (NACUBO, 1995, p 33)

Instead, pushing a good organization to become better "requires great cooperation, initiative, and willingness to make sacrifices from many people." (Kotter, 1996, p. 35)

Empowering Leaders Throughout the Campus

The second category of leaders described above by Alexander and Serfass (1999) is usually more respectful of their coworkers, more encouraging of their progress, and are interested in seeing them develop into effective leaders themselves, than are the first category of leaders described earlier in this paper. Creating professional development opportunities that will enable workers to fulfill their own expectations for success or fulfillment will become more and more prevalent in the workplace as organizations look for ways to improve the quality of the environment. As universities practice what they preach about the virtue of improving the common good, policies and procedures for making professional development opportunities available to faculty and staff alike will become more expected in personnel approaches at these institutions.

"It is through the continuous improvement philosophy and its principles that the abilities of the educational leader are enhanced and the synergistic potential of the human resources in the organization is released" (Alexander & Serfass, 1999, p. xi). People are the most important component of any organization, and leaders with a quality agenda need to do everything possible to unleash the full capabilities of all employees. Kouzes and Posner (1993) view the empowerment of coworkers as "freeing them to use the power and skills they already have....Credible leaders in this sense are liberators" (p. 157).

Being considered by coworkers as the "liberator" of their abilities and skills could be a powerful motivator for leaders to empower every worker who has high aspirations to achieve her/his full potential. This will take no small amount of planning, patience, and resources to become a reality on a university campus, but adopting this perspective provides employees with opportunities to think new thoughts and dream new dreams about what their futures might hold. As Ulmer (1997) has said, "It is easier to respond spectacularly to crises than to sustain excellence and support teamwork over the long haul" (p. 12). Developing teamwork and community among faculty and staff also contributes to creating an environment that is receptive to quality improvement on campus. With constant demands on the shrinking budgetary resources on college campuses, there must be tremendous commitment from leaders for personal and professional growth of coworkers to provide the adequate funding necessary for professional development and improvement.

Empowering coworkers, whether they are volunteers in a nonprofit organization or faculty and staff in higher education institutions, calls for new models for leadership to represent the relationship between leaders and followers. Another political reality that leaders with a quality agenda must confront is that *the hierarchical pyramid lives on in academe.* Top-down decision making with command and control of employees, remains the prevailing model of leadership in many organizations, and yet colleges and universities have one of the most sophisticated, highly trained, skilled, and informed employee pools that exists in any organization. There are better models for leadership than the traditional hierarchical pyramid if empowering

coworkers becomes a desired emphasis of the leaders. Turning the hierarchical pyramid on its peak (Drushal & Drushal, 2001, p. 56) provides a visual representation of a proposed culture as depicted in Figure 1.

The model of leadership outlined in Figure 1 represents the relationship between leaders and followers, and outlines the necessary characteristics to create a dynamic and productive organization of people who care for others in society. Turning the hierarchical pyramid on its peak reflects a way of being with co-workers that creates an egalitarian (leader as first among coworkers [Greenleaf, 1977]) environment rather than a boss/subordinate power relationship that typically exists in organizations (Drushal & Drushal, 2001). The concept of and the word empowerment has become overused and under implemented in the business community. Especially in nonprofit organizations, CEOs should give careful consideration to its benefits. Eadie (1997) offers four reasons why this should happen:

1. People have substantial influence on the nonprofit's direction and, hence, on their own destinies.

2. They make significant contributions to the organization's success by using fully their skills, talents, abilities, experience, intelligence, and other resources.

3. They grow more capable psychologically, managerially, technically, and politically.

4. Their personal needs are met as far as possible. (p. 99)

The end result of empowering coworkers brings with it the blurring of the lines that separate leaders and followers. This can be a healthy outcome and serves to further enhance the commitment and loyalty of employee to higher education institutions, but everyone always knows who has what responsibility in the organization. With greater participation in decision-making and decisions being pushed to the front line of where the problem or situation exists, coworkers will become more responsible for what is done. Of course, they must be capable and willing to assume both responsibility and accountability for decisions made (Hughes, et.al., 1999).

> Organizations have learned that men and women cannot be energized and enthusiastic about their work if they have to get a dozen approvals to do what they know is best for the customer or the quality of the product. (Moxley, 2000, p. 69)

Inverting the hierarchical pyramid where leaders support the organization empowering coworkers to assume more responsibility for decisions that are made, helps to build respect among leaders and followers through the use of participative decision making. When employees know that they will be consulted for their best-proposed solution to an existing problem, their self-image and self-confidence improves because they learn that their opinion matters, and they are taken seriously by the leadership of the organization (Drushal, 1986). One possible reason that leaders would not entertain such a radical idea is because it might, from their perspective, result in diminishing their personal power and control in the institution.

Figure 1. Drushal Model of Leadership

Conducting ongoing employee satisfaction surveys, for example, provides excellent data and information for leaders to consider in creating an empowering environment, and the subliminal message this sends to coworkers at the grass roots level is that the leaders care about them and their perspective on matters of importance to them and the organization. These surveys usually include questions about "the fairness of opportunities for advancement, the cooperativeness of coworkers, openness and trust in the working environment, the degree to which good work is recognized, and the accessibility of managers and their openness to new ideas" (Cohen & Prusak, 2001, p. 151).

The responsibility of the leadership in this is to analyze the data gained from the surveys and to do something about the identified areas of concern with dispatch. Leaders should not argue with the findings or become defensive, but listen to what is said - even the unpleasant things - and build credibility with coworkers by developing solutions, or at least processes to arrive at solutions, as quickly as possible. Attending to the perspective of the grass root employees sends a clear message that they are a significant contributor to the organizational agenda. Often this provides an excellent avenue for communication. "If a person with broad knowledge and experience can be combined with people who can describe the problem, there is a synergism that creates innovation" (Crosby, 2000, p. 41). Creating solutions, even innovation, together across areas of responsibility provides dialogue and opportunities to forge something unique and empowering in the work environment.

Focusing on Institutional Aspirations

Faculty in institutions of higher education usually do not think of themselves as employees. Consequently, leaders must devise alternative ways of tapping into their wisdom, perspective, and advice on matters that effect the college or university. Senge (1990), believes that people are motivated primarily by two things - fear or aspiration. Faculty are usually skeptical about the motivation of administrators, so creating a dialogue opportunity between the two groups becomes a challenge worth taking. Here is an example of what can be done to surmount this hurdle.

With the identified purpose of evaluating their office work space, the provost at a mid-western university sent a letter to each faculty member requesting an appointment in his/her office to discuss three things:

1. What would make your office a more effective place to work?

2. If you could invest $250,000 in this campus that would make a measurable difference in the academic environment, what would you do with the money?

3. What would you like to see this University be known for in five years?

When the secretary called to make the appointment, only a few faculty were not interested in having this visit and dialogue. Each visit with a faculty person took a minimum of thirty minutes and all appointments made were completed during the Fall Semester.

The provost kept careful notes of the responses to each question and lists were made of equipment needed in the offices. These office items were purchased the following summer and in place by fall, and the faculty member selected items, colors, and the style of what was ordered. Completing these purchases in a timely manner was particularly important, because the promotion and tenure criteria had increased at this institution in recent years, and the administration needed to show its willingness to assist faculty in tangible ways to be more productive. A pleasant and functional office environment is critical to achieving productivity.

As notes were compiled on the second question, another political reality appeared that leaders with a quality agenda should keep in mind. *Faculty have difficulty thinking beyond their own department* to the benefits and needs of the larger institution. Nearly all of the ways faculty suggested to use a quarter of a million dollars would directly benefit his/her program, department, or students. The first thought of many magnanimous faculty was to give the money for student scholarships or the institutional endowment, but the provost pressed them for something more specific and tangible, to "make a measurable difference" in the campus.

After the office visits were complete, the provost categorized the responses to the third question and clustered these comments around the seven Baldrige criteria for performance excellence in educational institutions. Two evening sessions were hosted where volunteers from the faculty and administration came together to develop draft aspiration statements for the future of the university, using the words and thoughts of the anonymous faculty members. Once the original seven draft statements were written, a campus-wide e-mail dialogue ensued for seven weeks (one statement per week) to refine the wording and to provide an opportunity for greater involvement by faculty than merely the forty participants who chose to come together to congeal the original statements. Involvement in the process would, hopefully, bring widespread ownership of the aspiration statements. Senge, et.al., (1999) states that, "Shared commitment to change develops only with collective capability to build shared aspirations" (p. 9).

When the aspiration statements were complete, they were presented to the Board of Trustees to review and amend, if necessary. The Board accepted these faculty aspiration statements, and the provost proceeded to integrate these statements into the upcoming strategic planning process. The intent was to make a conscious effort to plan for the aspirations or changes that faculty believed were necessary that would enable the university to develop a profile of distinction among academic programs in the region.

These seven aspiration statements became the shared vision for what faculty wanted to see happen in the next five years, and these statements became motivating factors for strategic planning as "the vision [aspiration] provides a context for designing and managing the change goals and the effort needed to bridge the gap to reach those goals" (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992, p. 25). Kotter (1996) reminds leaders with a quality agenda that, "with deeply cynical people, you rarely achieve successful change" (p.

83). The university community is often cynical about the benefit of any strategic planning process.

Faculty and staff need to come together around a shared vision and/or aspirations for what will be accomplished to move to the next stage of identifying what data to collect and analyze to validate the desired results of continuous quality improvement. This exercise will reduce the campus cynicism toward developing a strategic planning document that merely sits on the shelf with no apparent action taken to fulfill the goals contained in it.

Moving to a Data-Driven Decision Making Climate

Gathering performance data regarding the quality of higher education is an illusive task, and much is being written on the topic. National accreditation agencies have made assessment of learning outcomes a cornerstone of university re-accreditation processes, and faculties struggle to meet the perceived added demands this places upon them. "Higher education ostensibly must prepare for a three-tier system of review that includes national baseline standards, state performance standards, and accreditation standards for recognition of overall excellence" (Gaither, et.al.,1994, p. 11). What is even worse, much of this information will be made public and will enable comparisons to be made between institutions' scores, putting even greater pressure on universities to justify and document their performance record over time. In some states, state funding for public institutions will be linked to these scores and data. All of this is an anathema to faculty who view this as unwelcome and unwarranted scrutiny of their heretofore ivory tower enclaves.

Herein lies another political reality for the leader with a quality agenda in higher education. Faculty and administrators believe that *data-based decision making is for businesses.* Nothing could be farther from the truth, and this imposed focus on documenting program quality will ultimately be a very good thing for the contemporary agenda in higher education. Defining what represents a high quality program is an inevitable first challenge for the leader with a quality agenda. A suggestion for this definition is to use one created for constructing a theory of program quality, i.e., "We broadly defined high-quality programs as those which, from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, contribute to enriching learning experiences for students that positively affect their growth and development" (Haworth & Conrad, 1997, p.15). Still, assessing those achievements is difficult to document, and "how can quality be improved if we have no idea what needs improving" (Haworth & Conrad, p.171)? With the public's eroding confidence in the ability of higher education institutions to fulfill their published mission and goals, gathering data, analyzing it, and making appropriate changes based on the assessment data gathered will provide a good return on the investment of time, energy, and resources in this activity.

There are clearly at least two foci for data gathering from which to create baseline institutional performance information; one is institutional in nature (institutional effectiveness measures) and the other relates to individual program quality (academic program review). Many universities

struggle more with the *why* to conduct institutional effectiveness/program review monitoring or student learning outcomes assessment and not with the *how* to conduct the process. If that is the case in the institution where the leader finds him/herself, leaders with a quality agenda are advised to invest their energies into some other activity that will show greater promise for actual change (Nichols, 1995).

Nichols (1995) provides a sobering thought for leaders that bears careful consideration. No one in academia seems to struggle with the wisdom of gathering data on tuition increases and comparing themselves with competitive institutions, or following the increases over time in the institution's endowment, or in the number of faculty with terminal degrees. But suggest that student performance on core competency development should be ascertained and compared with other institutions, or suggest that faculty productivity should be monitored to demonstrate progress, or suggest that academic advising processes should receive greater scrutiny and attention by faculty, and the leader who has the courage to follow through on these beliefs by designing methods to ascertain this information risks a great deal. Earlier in this paper, Alexander and Serfass refer to these leaders as *trailblazers* in their own institutions. As the saying goes, "nothing ventured, nothing gained," and certainly documenting improvement cannot be determined without accurate and believable data.

Without baseline data and conducting periodic longitudinal checks on the current state of indicators, the institution has nothing except anecdotal information upon which to base decisions.

> Because today's students are more demanding, and they tend to "shop" competitively, benchmarking enables colleges and universities to improve by comparing performance (both administratively and academically) with comparable or peer institutions....Benchmarking provides valuable information and hard data, which is needed by colleges and universities to measure productivity. (Alstete, 1995, p. 4)

There is no substitute for utilizing some form of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) approach to improve the quality of all that comprises university life. This cycle of thought and activities is attributed to W. Edwards Deming, the foremost authority on quality initiatives in Japan and ultimately the U.S.A., and can be employed by any institution intent upon taking a continuous quality improvement journey.

Conducting external and internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) surveys poses a frightening but extremely valuable resource of information for the higher education institution. This process is akin to receiving one's first report card; there are some affirmations for what has been accomplished, but multiple suggestions for items that need attention and improvement. This information can be a bitter pill for leaders who only want to hear good things about their institution. SWOT analyses becomes a critical activity to pursue which culminates into the change initiatives that emerge through the strategic planning process.

Combining the results from the SWOT analysis, Academic Program Review, Institutional Effectiveness initiatives, and strategic planning efforts, positions the higher education institution to select appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) to use as internal benchmarks and monitor their progress on them over time. KPIs can be defined as, "a measure of an essential outcome of a particular organizational performance activity, or an important indicator of a precise health condition of an organization" (Dolence, Rowley, & Lujan, 1997, p.17). Determining the KPIs that an institution decides to monitor that will gauge its performance should be established by a task-force representing all facets of the institution. Taylor and Massey (1996) have identified ten indicators they believe are especially important to monitor to document institutional performance. The selection of KPIs should reflect both academic and administrative functions and agreement to monitor these data should be agreed to by the institution's leadership and governing bodies.

Developing a Strategic Planning Process that Fulfills Campus Expectations

Change happens accidentally or by design. Choose design. This is both a political reality and a word of advice to the leader with a quality agenda. Until recently, only businesses engaged in strategic planning. Now any institution that desires to create planned change utilizes some form of long-range (3-5 years) planning process. Although multiple definitions of strategic planning exist, the process outlined below incorporates the following aspects: "explicit steps are followed, interactions occur among people and groups, materials are collected, multiple views are presented and collected, plans are drafted and reviewed, and actions are initiated" (Alvino,1995, p. 3).

If an institution desires to pursue strategic **quality** planning and continuous improvement, another layer of expectation may be placed on the outcome of the strategic planning process. Alexander and Serfass (1999) suggest that, "strategic quality planning may be described as the incorporation of the principles of strategic planning and the quality management philosophy to produce a data-driven forecast that has high validity and probability of occurring" (p. 22).

By responding to the question in each of the following seven steps, the answers will assist the non-profit organization in determining what it desires to be like in the future, and suggest methods and means by which to achieve whatever is proposed in the planning process. The seven steps and questions are:

Vision - What do we want to become in the future?

Mission - Who are we, why do we exist, and what should we accomplish?

Purpose - Why do this particular thing?

Goals - What do we want to happen as a result of our efforts?

Strategy - How will this particular thing be accomplished?

Evaluation - How will we know our purpose is being fulfilled?

Redirection - Given what we have learned from the data, which areas of this organization should be refined? (Drushal, 1994)

Although this may appear to be a simplistic approach to planning, these questions can be used as an initial step to generate dialogue from individuals and groups with disparate views and agendas on what the organization should be about in the future. Reaching consensus regarding the direction of the institution and change initiatives to consider for the future, comprises a valuable process of information collection for the planning process. "To many the most critical aspect of strategic planning is the value achieved through the interaction of the participants, the improved understanding of the organization, the setting of direction, and finally the effect of decisions implemented" (Alvino, 1995, p. 99).

Differences in degrees of boldness of approach to change exist between reengineering and continuous incremental improvement outlined through strategic planning. Alexander and Serfass (1999) define reengineering as "starting over" (p. 30), while continuous incremental improvement outlines small steps taken in the agreed upon same direction. "Some feel that reengineering is the penalty for lack of continuous improvement" (p. 30). No one in higher education wants to start over designing the entire educational enterprise, so continuous incremental improvement should be adopted as a primary goal in strategic planning.

Conclusion

Like the age old debate of which is more important to development--environment or heredity--authors continue to take sides regarding the value of leadership or lack of it in organizations. Is it necessary or not? The inverted leadership pyramid suggested herein underscores the need for courageous leadership of coworkers. Even when an egalitarian culture exists, everyone knows who the leader is and the responsibilities s/he carries. For institutions that truly desire to pursue a continuous quality improvement process, fundamental change must take place. Seymour (1996) identifies the course of action necessary to undertake as "to: (a) change what the university does; (b) change how it does what it does; and (c) change the fundamental cultural values that drive the decisions about what is done and how it is done" (p. 286). These ideas represent no small challenge to the university community.

All this elicits the final political reality for leaders with a quality agenda, which is *institutions of higher education are resistant to change.* "Top leadership is essential" to pursuing a continuous quality improvement (CQI) journey because "there is a strongly rooted resistance to fundamental change that is difficult to overcome" (Seymour, 1996, p. 292). This kind of CQI change can rarely be accomplished in a command and control environment. "True humility is the cornerstone of successful change leadership: it inspires trust, it steers a firm course that builds confidence and commitment among colleagues and followers, it allows for the listening and learning that are critical to creativity and growth (Eadie, 1997, p. 63).

Eadie (1997) believes that:

> To give the values, vision, and mission statements meaning, the nonprofit chief executive must ensure that they are widely communicated, that they are seriously used as planning and decision making tools, and that the chief executive never violates them in any major way. Otherwise they will quickly lose their power to inspire, motivate, and shape behavior. (p. 49)

Trailblazers arise. The time has come for communities of learners to band together around the mission, vision, and core values determined together and work toward the greater good of society. As leaders and coworkers work together to create a receptive environment for qualitative improvement, focus on what the organization aspires to become, move to a data-driven decision-making climate, and develop a strategic planning process to fulfill campus expectations, much enthusiasm, commitment, and trust will emerge within the community.

This is a road less traveled in higher education and there are not many sojourners on the path, but that does not mean it is not a path worth taking. It will require great stamina, vision, patience, all the while creating partnerships and becoming mentors for others along the way to become *trailblazers* themselves. The qualitative future of higher education may depend on this group of people who intentionally position themselves at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid, and who facilitate changing current political realities into desired reality in the campus culture.

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SYNTHESIS AND EPILOGUE *

Steven M. Janosik
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* A summary of the presentations made at the International Conference on Quality in Higher Education appears on the conference web site. The major these expressed here are taken from those presentations. The questions and statements developed as part of this summary have been attributed to the appropriate presenter and are cross-referenced to the papers that appear in this monograph for your convenience. (See http://filebox.vt.edu/chre/elps/EPI/Quality/index.htm).

As David, Don, and I were planning this year's conference, we thought it would be a good idea if WE made some attempt to summarize what WE knew was going to be an extremely stimulating and rewarding experience.

I suppose at this point, I could remind everyone that David and Don are full professors; I am not. I could remind everyone that they drew the long straws; I did not. Or I could remind Don Creamer specifically that WE and US are plural pronouns and that I and ME are not, for you see the task for summarizing this week-long conference has fallen singularly to me despite what is indicated in the program schedule.

But what I want all of you to really know is that it has been a privilege for me to have been part of this program and I want to thank all of you for your participation and enthusiasm. In particular, I want to thank our presenters who were just marvelous. I had the good fortune to review their formal papers before the conference and I knew in advance that we were in for a very enriching experience.

Each of our presenters exceeded my wildest expectations and so to use the terminology so frequently connected with quality, you should know that I am one very satisfied stakeholder. This year's monograph will include all these excellent presentations along with additional conference material and we will mail it to you just as soon as it is available.

Now, lots of us have been taking notes all week long and I want to share mine with you. But before I begin, I wanted to try to make some sense of the framework I am going to use. It came to me about 2:30 am Wednesday morning while listening to some rather rowdy students just outside my window. It is only one person's view. I hope you will find it helpful.

At the outset let me acknowledge that I am not sure what effect the charm of Oxford, the warm British ale, the stimulation of new colleagues and old friends, and jet lag have had on my senses. It is a most pleasant sensation but I will let you be the judge.

First, it seems to me that we could divide the conference into two parts. Monday through the first Wednesday program provided for me a MACRO view of quality in higher education. I viewed the program beginning with Gerry Lang's presentation as a MICRO view of several important components of quality. These case studies, program summaries, and specific strategies to address specific organization problems have provided us with a glimpse of how we might move our institutions forward on this quest for improvement or greater quality.

The MACRO view addressed some large, big picture issues from a multiple countries perspective. From the first five presentations, I have framed seven questions and I pose them for your consideration. I mean no disrespect to the substance of your work and conversations. Reducing your remarks to a single question was no easy task. Remember, I come to pose the question not to answer it – I'll leave that part of the presentation for my good colleague, Don Creamer. Here they are:

Question One - How do we create processes that assess quality in a reasonably comprehensive manner that take into account the complexity of the enterprise without distorting the true purpose of higher education? (Sayer, p. 1)

Question Two – How can we make the mission and its related core activities the primary measurement driver and avoid the use of system wide templates to access quality? (Long, p. 21)

Question Three – How does higher education with its focus on student learning, position itself to become the central player, not a reactor, in the quality assessment process? (vanderHeyden, p. 14)

Question Four – How do institutions of higher education respond to stakeholders who have multiple expectations and thus multiple views of what quality is? (vanderHeyden, p. 14)

Question Five – How can we use language to better define what we do and what we have accomplished in a proactive way to help shape the expectations of our stakeholders? (Dittrich, supplemental presentation, p. 85)

As an aside, remember that Dr. Dittrich illustrated how language was used to develop Maastricht University as the "balcony of Europe." I am pleased to announce that based on high-level discussions at the Turf Tavern, West Texas A&M University will become known as "The Front Porch of the Mid-West" just as soon as Natrelle and Russell Long return to the states.

Question Six – How does higher education maintain its purpose, its aspirations, its hopes for, and its obligations to society in an environment where efficiency and accountability have become a major focus? (van Welie, p. 8) And finally,

Question Seven – What promise or threat does the Bologna Declaration hold for the quality movement in American higher education? (van Welie, p. 8)

For me, these are the seminal questions left on the table from several days of discussion. I want to raise these up for your continued consideration as you return

to your respective campuses. Now let's turn to the MICRO view.

I have chosen five statements to represent the four remaining programs that give us some excellent insight in how we might move our institutions forward. Here's my list. I would be interested in hearing yours.

> *Number One* – A good planning process and the strategic use of committees can be used to involve stakeholders in creating, redefining, and building support for expectations that become de facto measures of quality. (Lang, p. 27)
>
> *Number Two* – The quality of faculty, despite the input nature of the measure, must be actively managed if the quality of the institution is to be preserved. (Conley, p. 39)
>
> *Number Three* – The opportunity to replace personnel offers one the chance for institutional renewal and quality enhancement. (Stokes, p. 48)
>
> *Number Four* – Information technology can enhance quality only if its acquisition is carefully planned and well integrated with the core functions of the enterprise. (Cavanaugh, p. 56)
>
> *Number Five* – Efforts in quality enhancement must be fact based, persistent, and involve many people in the organization if real and lasting change is to occur. (Drushal, p. 65)

In a single week's program such as this one, many important topics are left untouched and those that are discussed do not always receive sufficient attention to reach some sort of closure or resolution. Still, the real value of this experience is to create an opportunity for talented people to raise, discuss, debate, and reflect upon important issues pertaining to quality in higher education in a substantive way and to learn from one another in a very special environment known as Oxford. This has been our goal and I want to thank each of you for helping us reach it.

International Conference on Quality in Higher Education
Exeter College, Oxford University, July 21-28, 2001

July 21, Saturday

8:00am - 5:00pm	Arrival and Registration at Exeter College
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm - 5:00pm	Free Time
6:00 pm	Dinner and Remarks by David Alexander

July 22, Sunday

8:00am	Breakfast at Exeter College
8:30am - 1:00pm	Free Time
1:00pm - 2:15pm	Lunch and Conference Welcome
2:30pm - 4:30pm	Walking Tour of Oxford
5:00pm	Class Photo
5:30pm	Cash Bar
6:30pm	Reception
7:30pm	Banquet

July 23, Monday

8:00am – 8:40am	Breakfast at Exeter College
8:45am - 10:30am	**Program I** Quality - The British Perspective Dr. John Sayer Tutor, Oxford University
10:30am - 11:00am	Break

11:00am - 12:15pm	**Program II** Quality Issues in Regional Universities in the U.S. Dr. Russell Long President West Texas State A&M University
12:15pm - 1:15pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Gather for Tour
1:30pm	Coach to Blenheim Palace
5:00pm	Return from Blenheim
5:30pm – 6:30pm	Cash Bar
6:30pm Dinner	
July 24, Tuesday	
8:00am – 9:30am	Breakfast at Exeter College
9:45am – 10:00am	Gather for the Walk to the Bodleian Library
10:00am- 12:00pm	Swearing-in and Tour of the Bodleian Library
12:15pm - 1:15pm	Lunch
1:30pm - 3:30pm	**Program III** Quality - the United States Perspective Dr. Marc vanderHeyden President St. Michaels' College
3:30pm – 4:30pm	**Program IV** The Transnational University Dr. Karl Dittrich President Maastricht University
5:30pm – 6:30pm	Cash Bar
6:30pm	Dinner

July 25, Wednesday

8:00am – 8:30am	Breakfast at Exeter College
8:30am – 8:45am	Walk to the Rhodes House for Morning Program
8:45am - 10:30am	**Program V**
	Quality - The Netherlands Perspective drs. Liesbeth van Welie Executive Vice President Maastricht University
10:30am - 11:00am	Break
11:00am - 12:15pm	**Program VI**
	A Case Study in Implementing Change in Academic Standards Dr. Gerald Lang Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs West Virginia University
12:15pm - 1:15pm	Lunch at Exeter College
1:15pm – 1:30pm	Free Time or Gather for Tour
1:30pm – 4:30pm	College Tour w/ David Alexander (Optional)
5:30pm – 6:30pm	Cash Bar
6:30pm	Dinner

July 26, Thursday

8:00am - 8:30am	Breakfast at Exeter College
8:30am - 8:40am	Walk to the Ashmolean Museum for Morning Program
8:40am – 9:40am	**Program VII**
	Faculty Retirement and Its Implication for Personnel Policy Ms. Valerie Conley NCES Consultant Virginia Tech

9:40am - 10:40am	**Program VIII** Maintaining High Quality While Replacing Retiring Faculty and Administrators Dr. Charlotte Stokes Vice President for Academic Affairs Humboldt State University
10:40am - 11:00am	Break
11:00am - 12:15pm	**Program IX** Information Technology, Curriculum Reform and Online Learning Dr. John Cavanaugh Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs University of North Carolina - Wilmington
12:15pm - 1:15pm	Lunch at Exeter College
1:15pm - 2:30pm	**Program X** Political Realities for Leaders with a Quality Agenda for Educational Institutions Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal Provost Ashland University
2:30pm - 3:30pm	**Program XI** Synthesis Don Creamer Professor & EPI Co-director Virginia Tech Steve Janosik Associate Professor & EPI Co-director Virginia Tech
3:30pm – 6:00pm	Free Time
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Cash Bar
7:00pm – 8:00pm	Reception
8:00pm	Banquet

July 27, Friday

8:00am – 8:35am	Breakfast at Exeter College
8:30am - 5:00pm	Cultural Activities in Oxford or London
12:30pm	Lunch on Your Own
5:00pm	Dinner on Your Own

July 28, Saturday

8:00am – 8:45am	Breakfast at Exeter College and Departure

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